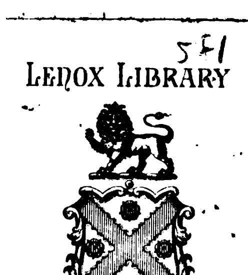





Landor



IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

OF

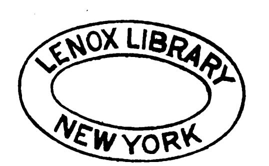
Literary Men and Statesmen.

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, ESQ.

THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR TAYLOR AND HESSEY,
93, FLEET-STREET,
AND 13, WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1824.


LENOX LIBRARY
NEW YORK



TO

GENERAL MINA.

SIR,

I INSCRIBE with your illustrious name the second volume of these dialogues, not because, of all the generals who have appeared in our age, you have displayed the greatest genius, the greatest constancy, and, what is equally rare, the greatest contempt of pleasure and titles and wealth and offices, but because your energies have been all exerted, under severe and unremitting adversity, in defence of law and civilization. Neither of these can exist in that country where any one is above them, and can dictate through any organ, how far they shall go, when they shall

speak, on whom they shall act feebly, on whom strongly. All the nations of Europe are in this condition, even those few the forms of whose government bear the image and superscription of Freedom. Turn your eyes upon the only republic (for such it is still called) now left in this quarter of the globe, and where will you find readier slaves to execute the mandates of Despotism? All conquerors and oppressors have imposed an oligarchy, where it was possible, some under one name, some under another: such was imposed by Sparta on the Athenians, such upon the Swiss, as now upon the Spaniards, by France. Switzerland, the asylum once of the persecuted, is hence become a mere porter's-lodge to the great prison-house, Europe. Law and Religion are the watch-words! I am not in a temper for irony, nor could you bear it . . . but what is the reason, to speak gravely, why religion and law are in a

worse condition now than they were seventeen centuries ago, while every other part of human knowledge has been so much improved? It is because the two greatest classes of men, two entire professions, and governments, altogether, such as they are constituted, are interested in maintaining their abuses, and because the sceptre is rather the prop of weakness than the symbol of authority. Hence the cant to keep the child quiet, and the indulgence to let him grasp and beslaver and break in pieces what is not his...

Every state, however small, contains more people than the wisest and most virtuous prince can render happy; why then want more? O! but making them happy is quite another thing: subjects are to give happiness as a tribute, and to receive it as a gratuity... If few subjects bring anxiety, many will bring more: if neither the fewer nor the numerous bring any,

then the worth of them can be but small to the proprietor: his want therefor is childish, and should be corrected and coerced like other childish wants.

You Spaniards have committed two great errors: the first, in not removing to Cuba six or seven hundred known and proven traitors, condemning three or four of the most eminent to death; the second, in not drawing closer the ties of affinity and commerce with Columbia, with a full acknowledgment of her independence. The former of these two duties can alone be questioned. Remove the case out of Spain into Rome, and ask yourself whether, if Lepidus had been crushed while he could be, Rome would not have been saved a hundred thousand of her best citizens at the expense of one among the most worthless. We should calculate for Humanity, and not leave the account in her hands, lest she drop it or lay it down.

The insolence of Despotism will urge her into schemes, if not subversive of her power, injurious to her quiet. The *Holy Allies* should in sound policy desire the establishment of republics in Greece, considering that country as a mere drain, whereby the ill humours of their subjects may be carried off. It should serve them as a galley of deportation, for those whose opinions are dangerous; just as America is in regard to England: and there is also this additional and paramount advantage, that, if they should publish their sentiments, neither the kings nor their subjects can read them: the former then cannot be offended, nor the latter led astray.

I know not, sir, whether you are a pious man, but if you are, you will see the finger of Providence in the midst of the calamities which distract your country.

Under it there springs forth in letters of fire a warning to the nations, of whatso-

ever race, language, or rites, throughout the new world, as (from the rapid vegetation, if I may say so, of its prosperity, and from the dissimilarity in every feature to this of ours) it may now indeed be called most emphatically..to form instantly a confederacy against external rule, against all dependence and usurpation, against institutions not founded upon that equable, sound, beneficent system, to which the best energies of Man, the sterner virtues, the milder charities, the comforts and satisfactions of life, its regulated and right affections, the useful arts, the ennobling sciences, with whatever is innocent in glory or exalted in pleasure, owe their origin, their protection, their progress, and their maturity. Columbia, without this invigorating shock, would have longer lain dormant or restless: Washington, to whom we principally are indebted for what little is left of freedom in the uni-

verse, would have set before her the bright example, and Bolivar would have followed it, in vain. She will receive into her bosom those whom circumstances armed against her, rather than jealousies or animosities or antipathies; and she will number among her children, not only those who have stood forward to defend her, but those also who, confiding in her generosity, call upon her in their adversities for defence. Rising on the wreck of Spain, she will invite to her from Europe those whom wars have ruined, those whom commerce has deserted, those whom letters have cast into dungeons, those whom the ancient institutions of their country have blinded with unseasonable love, and the new ones have marked with reprobation. The veteran, still bleeding for the king who banished him, may rest his bones a little while on her fresh turf, forbidden to repose them

in death under that which covers his father's.

Your unconquerable mind, sir, cannot be depressed; mine is, and perhaps ought not to be.

God preserve you many years.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Florence, November, 1823.

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

IN

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CONVERSATION I.

MILTON

AND

ANDREW MARVEL.

MILTON

AND

ANDREW MARVEL.

MILTON.

Friend Andrew, I am glad to hear that you amuse yourself in these bad times by the composition of a comedy, and that you have several plans in readiness for others. Now let me advise you to copy the better part of what the Greeks and Romans called the *old*, and to introduce songs and music, which, suitable as they are to Tragedy, are more so to the sister Muse. Furthermore, I could desire to see a piece modeled in all parts on the Athenian scheme, with the names and characters and manners of times past. For surely you would not add to the immorality of the age, by representing any thing of the present mode upon the theatre. Although we are more abundant in follies, which rather than vices are the ground-

work of comedy, we experience less disgust in touching those of other times than of our own; and in a drama the most ancient would have the most novelty. I know that all the periods and all the nations of the world united have less variety of character than we find in this one city: yet, as you write to amuse yourself and a few learned friends, I am persuaded you would gladly walk out of it for once, and sit down to delineate a Momus or a Satyr with at least as much complacency as a vulgar fopling or a partycoloured buffoon.

O Andrew! although our learning raiseth up against us many enemies among the low, and more among the powerful, yet doth it invest us with grand and glorious privileges, and grant to us a largess of beatitude. We enter our studies, and enjoy a society which we alone can bring together. We raise no jealousy by conversing with one in preference to another: we give no offence to the most illustrious, by questioning him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly. Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence: each interlocutor stands before us, speaks, or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. Nothing is past which we desire to be present; and we enjoy by anticipation somewhat

like the power which I imagine we shall possess hereafter of sailing on a wish from world to world. Surely you would turn away as far as possible from the degraded state of our country; you would select any vices and follies for description, rather than those that jostle us in our country-walks, return with us to our house-doors, and smirk on us in silks and satins at our churches.

Come, my old friend; take down your hortus-siccus: the live plants you would gather do both stink and sting: prythee leave them to wither or to rot, or to be plucked and collated by more rustic hands.

MARVEL.

I entertain an utter contempt for the populace, whether in robes or tatters; whether the face be bedawbed with cinnabar, or with dirt from the allies and shops. It appears to me, however, that there is as much difference between tragedy and comedy as between the heavens and the clouds, and that comedy draws its life from its mobility. We must take manners as we find them, and draw from the individual, not the species; into which fault Menander fell and seduced his followers. The characters on which he raised his glory were trivial and contemptible.

> Dum fallax servus, durus pater, improba lena
> Vivent, dum meretrix blanda, Menander erit.

His wisdom towered high above them, and he cloathed with smiles what Euripides charged with spleen. The beauty of his moral sentences was hurtful to the spirit of comedy, and I am convinced that, if we could recover his works, we should find them both less facetious and less dramatic than those of Plautus. Once, by way of experiment, I attempted to imitate his manner: I will give you a specimen: it is the best I have.

Friendship, in each successive stage of life,
As we approach him, varies to the view:
In youth he wears the face of Love himself,
Of Love without his arrows and his wings;
Soon afterwards with Bacchus and with Pan
Thou findest him, or hearest him resign
To some dog-pastor by the quiet fire,
With much good-will and jocular adieu,
His ageworn mule or brokenhearted steed.
Fly not, as thou wert wont, to his embrace,
Lest, after one long yawning gaze, he swear
Thou art the best good fellow in the world,
But he had quite forgotten thee, by Jove!
Or laughter wag his newly-bearded chin
At recollection of his childish hours.
But wouldst thou see, young man, his latest form,
When e'en this laughter, e'en this memory, fails?
Look at yon figtree statue, golden once,
As all would deem it; rottenness falls out
At every little chink the worms have made,
And if thou triest to lift it up again
It breaks upon thee: leave it, touch it not,
Its very lightness would encumber thee...
Come, thou hast seen it...tis enough...away!

MILTON.

This indeed is in the manner I would propose.

MARVEL.

Yet if it were spoken on our theatre, I should be condemned as a man ignorant of the art... and justly too...for it accords not with its complexion. Inevitable events and natural reflexions, but reflexions not exhibited before and events not expected, please me better than the most demonstrable facts, the most sober truths, the most clever improbabilities, and the most acute repartees. In comedy we should oftener raise reflexions than present them.

Now for plot.

Intricacy was always held necessary on the modern stage, and the more so when delicacy was the least. It was however so difficult to make the audience keep watch and ward for it, and to command an uninterrupted attention for five whole acts, that many of the best writers, from Terence to the present age, have combined two plots, hoping that what is twisted together will untwist together, and leaving a great deal to the goodness of Providence and to the faith and charity of their fellow creatures.

MILTON.

True enough: your plotters bring many great

changes into many whole families, and sometimes into several and distant countries, within the day; and, what is more difficult and incredible, send off all parties well satisfied, excepting one scape-goat. For my own share, I am contented with seeing a fault wittily rebuked and checked effectually, and think *that* surprising enough, considering the time employed in doing it, without the formation of attachments, the begetting or finding of children, bickerings, buffetings, deaths, marriages, distresses, wealth again, love again, whims and suspicions, shaking heads, and shaking hands. All these things are natural, I confess it; but one would rather breathe between them, and perhaps one would think it no bad husbandry to put some of them off until another season. The combination of them, after all, marvelous as it appears, is less difficult to contrive than to credit.

MARVEL.

I have always been an idle man, and have read or attended the greater part of the plays that are extant, and will venture to affirm that, exclusive of Shakespear's, and some Spanish pieces never represented nor translated, there are barely half a dozen plots amongst them, comic and tragic. So that it is evidently a much easier matter to run over the usual variations, than to keep entirely in

another tune and to raise up no recollections. Both in tragedies and comedies the changes are pretty similar, and nearly in the same places. You perceive the turns and windings of the road a mile before you, and you know exactly the precipice down which the hero or heroine must fall: you can discover with your naked eye, who does the mischief and who affords the help; where the assassin bursts forth with the dagger, and where the old gentleman shakes the crabstick over the shoulder of his dissolute nephew.

MILTON.

I do not wish direction-posts to perplexities and intrigues: I oppose this agrarian law, this general-inclosure-act: I would not attempt to square the circle of poetry; and am avowedly a nonjuror to the doctrine of grace and predestination in the drama.

MARVEL.

In my project, one action leads to and brings about another, naturally but not necessarily. The event is the confusion of the evil-doer, whose machinations are the sole means of accomplishing what their motion seemed calculated to thwart and overthrow. No character is introduced that doth not tend towards the developement of the plot;

no one is merely prompter to a witticism or master of the ceremonies to a repartee.

Characters in general are made subservient to the plot: here the plot is made subservient to the characters. All are real: I have only invited them to meet, and bestowed on them those abilities for conversation, without which a comedy might be very natural, but would not possess the nature of a comedy. I expose only what arises from the headiness of unruly passions, or is precipitated by the folly that verges upon vice. This exposure is in the corner of a room, not in the stocks nor in the marketplace. Comedy with me sits in an easy chair, as Menander is represented by the statuary: for it is as possible to be too busy on the scenic theatre as it is on the theatre of life. To those who admire the double plot and the machinery of the rope-walk, I only say, *Go to my betters whom you have so long neglected; carry off from them as much as you can bear; you are then welcome to rip up my sheet, and to sew a scene in where-ever the needle will go through: in this manner, the good may be made acceptable by the new, and the new can be no loser by the good.*

MILTON.

You say nothing about the chorus. I have in-

troduced it, you know, in my *Samson Agonistes*, and intend to bring it forward in my *Macbeth*.

MARVEL.

Dear John! thou art lucky in having escaped two Stuarts; and luckier still wilt thou be if thou escapest one Macbeth. Contend with Homer, but let Shakespear rest: drop that work; prythee drop it for ever: thou mayest appear as high as he is (for who can measure either of you?) if thou wilt only stand some way off.

In tragedy the choruses were grave people called upon, or ready without it, to give advice and consolation in cases of need. To set them singing and moralizing amidst the dolefullest emergencies, when the poet should be *reporting progress*, is like sticking a ballad upon a turnstile to hasten folks on. The comic poet called out his regular chorus in imitation of the tragic, till the genius of Menander took a middle flight between Aristophanes and Euripides, Comedy had among the ancients her ovations but not her triumphs.

MILTON.

Menander's form, which the Romans and French have imitated, pleases me less than the older. He introduced better manners, but employing no variety of verse, and indulging in few sallies of mer-

riment, I incline to believe that he more frequently instructed than entertained.

The verse itself of Aristophanes is a dance of Bacchanals: one cannot read it with composure. He had however but little true wit, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. There is abundance of ribaldry, and of that persecution by petulance which the commonalty call banter.

MARVEL.

He takes delight in mocking and ridiculing the manner of Euripides. In my opinion, if a modern may form one upon the subject, he might, with his ingenuity, have seized more points to let his satire lighten on, and have bent them to his purpose with more dexterity and address.

MILTON.

His ridicule on the poetry is misplaced, on the manners is inelegant. Euripides was not less wise than Socrates nor less tender than Sappho. There is a tenderness which elevates the genius, there is also a tenderness which corrupts the heart. The latter, like every impurity, is easy to communicate; the former is difficult to conceive. Strong minds alone possess it; virtuous minds alone value it. I hold it abominable to turn into derision what is excellent. To render undesirable what ought to

be desired, is the most mischievous and diabolical of malice. To exhibit him as contemptible, who ought, according to the conscience of the exhibitor, to be respected and revered, is a crime the more odious, as it can be committed only by great violence to his feelings, against the loud reclamations of Justice and amongst the struggles of Virtue. And what is the tendency of this brave exploit? to cancel the richest legacy that ever was bequeathed to him, and to prove his own bastardy in relation to the most illustrious of his species. If it is disgraceful to demolish or obliterate a tombstone, over the body of the most obscure among the dead; if it is an action for which a boy would be whipped, as guilty of the worst idleness and mischief; what is it to overturn the monument that Gratitude has erected to Genius, and to break the lamp that is lighted by Devotion overagainst the image of Love? The writings of the wise are the only riches our posterity cannot squander: why depreciate them? To Antiquity again...but afar from Aristophanes.

MARVEL.

Our admiration of Antiquity is in part extraneous from her merits: yet even this part, strange as the assertion may appear, is well founded. We learn many things from the ancients which it cost

them no trouble to teach, and upon which they employed no imagination, no learning, no time. Those amongst us who have copied them, have not succeeded. To produce any effect on morals or on manners, or indeed to attract any attention, which, whatever be the pretext, is the principal if not the only aim of most writers, and certainly of all the comic, we must employ the language and consult the habits of our age. We may introduce a song without retrospect to the old comedy; a moral sentence, without authority from the new. The characters, even on their improved and purified stage, were, we know, of so vulgar and uncleanly a cast, that, with all their fine reflexions, there was something like the shirt of Lazarus patched with the purple of Dives. Do not imagine I am a detracter from the glory of our teachers, from their grace, their elegance, their careful weeding away of small thoughts, that higher and more succulent might have room.

MILTON.

No, Marvel, no. Between their poetry and ours you perceive as great a difference as between a rose and a dandelion. There is, if I may express myself so, without pursuing a metaphor till it falls exhausted at my feet, a sort of refreshing odour flying off it perpetually; not enough to op-

press or to satiate; nothing is beaten or bruized; nothing smells of the stalk; the flower itself is half-concealed by the Genius of it hovering round. Write on the same principles as guided them.

MARVEL.

Yes; but I would not imitate them further. I will not be pegged down to any plot, nor follow any walk, however well rolled, where the persons of the drama cannot consistently lead the way.

MILTON.

Reasonable enough: but why should not both comedy and tragedy be sometimes so disciplined as may better fitt them for our closets? I allow that their general intention is for action: it is also the nature of odes to be accompanied by voices and instruments. I only would suggest to you, that a man of learning, with a genius suited to comedy, may as easily found it upon antiquity, as the tragedian of equal abilities his tragedy, and that the one might be made as acceptable to the study as the other to the stage. I would not hamper you with rules and precedents. Comply with no other laws or limits than such as are necessary to the action. There may be occasion for songs; and there may not: besides, a poet may be capable of producing a good comedy who is incapable of composing a tolerable stanza; and,

on the other hand, Pindar himself might have been lost in a single scene.

MARVEL.

True: but tell me, friend John, are you really serious in your proposal of interspersing a few antiquated words, that my comedy may be acceptable to the readers of Plautus and Terence? This I hear.

MILTON.

I have, on several occasions, been a sufferer by the delivery of my sentiments to a friend. Antiquated words, used sparingly and characteristically, give often a force, and always a gravity to compositions. It is not every composition that admits them: a comedy *may* in one character, but charily and choicely.

There is in Plautus a great fund of language and of wit: he is very far removed from our Shakespear, but resembles him more than any other of the ancients. In reading him and Terence, my delight arises not so materially from the aptitude of character and expression, as from a clear and unobstructed insight into the feelings and manners of those times, and an admission into the conversations to which Scipio and Lælius attended.

MARVEL.

Now, what think you about the number of acts?

MILTON.

There is no reason, in nature or in art, why a drama should occupy five. Be assured, my friend Andrew, the fifth-act-men will hereafter be thought as absurd as the fifth-monarchy-men. The number of acts should be optional, like the number of scenes, and the division of them should equally be subordinate to the convenience of the poet in the procession of his events. In respect to duration, nothing is requisite or reasonable but that it should not loiter nor digress, and that it should not exhaust the patience nor disappoint the expectation of the audience. Dramatists have gone to work, in this business, with so much less of wisdom than of system, that I question, when they say a *comedy or tragedy in five acts*, whether they should not rather say in *five scenes;* whether, in fact, the scenes should not designate the divisions, and the acts the subdivisions: for, the *scene* usually changes to constitute a new *act*, and when a fresh *actor* enters we usually call it a new *scene*. I do not speculate on any one carrying the identity of place, strictly, throughout a whole performance, least of all a tragedy, unless for the purpose of ridiculing some late French critics. As a tragedy must consist of opposite counsels and unforeseen events, if the author should exhibit his whole action in one hall

or chamber, he would be laughed to scorn. Comedy is not formed to astonish: she neither expects nor wishes great changes. Let her argue rarely; let her remark lightly; if she reasons too well, her audience will leave her, and reflect upon it. Those generally are the most temperate, who have large and well-stored cellars. You have every thing at home, Andrew, and need not step out of your way. Those shew that they possess much who hold much back.

MARVEL.

Be not afraid of me: I will not push my characters forward, and make them stare most one upon another when they are best acquainted. The union of wisdom with humour is unexpected enough for me: I would rather see it than the finest piece of arras slit asunder, or the richest screen in christendom overturned; than the cleverest trick that was ever played among the scenes, or than a marriage that should surprize me like an Abissinian's with a Laplander.

CONVERSATION II.

WASHINGTON

AND

FRANKLIN.

WASHINGTON

AND

FRANKLIN.

WASHINGTON.

Yes, Benjamin, let us render thanks to the disposer of events, under whom, by the fortitude, the wisdom, and the endurance of our Congress, the affairs of America are brought at last to a triumphant issue.

FRANKLIN.

Do not refuse the share of merit due to yourself, which is perhaps the largest.

WASHINGTON.

I am not of that opinion: if I were, I might acknowledge it to you, although not to others. Suppose me to have made a judicious choice in my measures; the Congress then made a judicious choice in me; so that whatever praise may be allowed me, is at best but secondary.

FRANKLIN.

I do not believe that the world contains so many men, who reason rightly, as New England. Serious, religious, peaceable, inflexibly just and courageous, their stores of intellect are not squandered in the regions of fancy, or in the desperate ventures of new-found and foggy metaphysics, but warehoused and kept sound at home, and ready to be brought forth in good and wholesome condition at the first demand. Their ancestors had abandoned their estates, their families, and their country, for the obtainment of peace and freedom, and they themselves were ready to traverse the vast wildernesses of an unexplored continent rather than submitt to that moral degradation which alone can satisfy the capriciousness of despotism. Their gravity is converted into enthusiasm: even those amongst them who never, in childhood itself, expressed in speech or countenance a sign of admiration, express it strongly in their old age at your exploits.

WASHINGTON.

Benjamin, one would imagine that we both had been educated in courts, and that I were a man who could give, and you a man who could ask. Prythee, my friend, be a philosopher in somewhat more than books and bottles, and, as you have

learned to manage the clouds and lightnings, try an experiment on the management of your fancies. I declare, on my conscience, I do not know what I have done extraordinary, unless we are forced to acknowledge, from the examples to which we have been accustomed, that it is extraordinary to possess power and to remain honest. I believe it may be so: but this was a matter of reflection with me: by serving my country I gratified my heart and all its wants. Perhaps I am not so happy a creature as the fellow who smokes his pipe upon the bench at the tavern-door; but I am as happy as my slow blood allows; and I keep my store of happiness in the same temperature the whole year round, by the double casement of action and integrity.

FRANKLIN.

I do not assert that there never was a general who disposed his army in the day of battle with skill equal to yours: that, in many instances, must depend almost as much on his adversary as on himself: but I assert that no man ever displayed such intimate knowledge of his whole business, guarded so frequently and so effectually against the impending ruin of his forces, and shewed himself at once so circumspect and so daring. To

have inoculated one half of your troops under the eye of the enemy......

WASHINGTON.

Those actions are great, which require great calculation, and succeed in consequence of its correctness; those alone, or nearly alone, are called so, which succeed without any. I knew the supineness of the British general, his utter ignorance of his profession, his propensity to gaming, to drinking, in short to all the camp vices. I took especial care that he should be informed of my intention to attack him, on the very day when my army was, from the nature of its distemper, the most disabled. Instead of anticipating me, which this intelligence, credited as it was, would have induced a more skilful man to do, he kept his troops unremittingly on the alert, and he himself is reported to have been sober three days together. The money which he ought to have employed in obtaining just and necessary information, he lost at cards; and when he found that I had ventured to inoculate my army and that the soldiers had recovered, he little imagined that half the number was at that moment under the full influence of the disease.

Attribute no little of our success to the only

invariable policy of England, which is, to sweep forward to the head of all her armaments the grubs of rotten boroughs and the droppings of the gamingtable; and, Benjamin, be assured that although men of eminent genius have been guilty of all other vices, none worthy of more than a secondary name has ever been a gamester. Either an excess of avarice, or a deficiency of what in physics is called stimulus and excitability, is the cause of it; neither of which can exist in the same bosom with genius, with patriotism, or with virtue. Clive, the best English general since Marlborough, was apparently an exception: but he fell not into this degrading vice, until he was removed from the sphere of exertion, until his abilities had begun to decay, and his intellects in some measure to be deranged.

FRANKLIN.

I quite agree with you in your main proposition, and see no exception to it in Clive, who, although he gained the most glorious victory that has been obtained since the battle of Poictiers, was more capable of ruining a country than of raising one. Those who record that chess was invented in the Trojan war, would have informed us if Ulysses, Agamemnon, or Diomedes ever played at it; which

however is usually done without a stake, nor can it be called in any way a game of chance. Gustavus Adolphus and Eugene of Savoy, who hold, I think I have heard you say, the most distinguished rank among the generals of modern nations, and Marlborough who united with military science an equal share of political sagacity and dexterous conciliation, and Frederic of Prussia, and Charles XII of Sweden, and William III of England, had springs and movements within themselves, which did not require to be wound up every night. They deemed it indecorous to be selvages to an ell of green cloth, and scandalous to cast upon a card what would cover a whole country with plenteousness.

Gaming is the vice of those nations which are too effeminate to be barbarous and too depraved to be civilized, and which unite the worst qualities of both conditions; as for example the rags and lace of Naples, its lazaroni and other titulars. The Malays, I acknowledge, are less effeminate, and in all respects less degraded, and still are gamesters: but gaming with the Malays is a substitute for beetel; the Neapolitan games on a full snuffbox. Monarchs should encourage the practise, as the Capets have done constantly; for

it brings the idle and rich into their capitals, holds them from other intrigues and from more active parties, makes many powerful families dependent, and satisfies many young officers who would otherwise want employments. Republics, on the contrary, should punish the first offence with fine and imprisonment, the second with a public whipping and a year's hard labour, the third with deportation.

WASHINGTON.

As you please in monarchies and republics: but prythee say nothing of them in mixt governments: do not affront the earliest coadjutors and surest reliances of our commonwealth. The leaders of party in England are inclined to play: and what was a cartouche but yesterday will make a rouleau tomorrow.

FRANKLIN.

Fill it then with base money, or you will be overreached. They are persons of some reputation for eloquence; but if I conducted a newspaper in that country, I should think it a wild speculation to pay the wiser of them half a crown aday for his most elaborate composition. When either shall venture to publish a history, a dialogue, or even a speech of his own, his talents will then be appreciated justly. God grant (for our differences have not yet annihilated the remembrance of our re-

lationship) that England may never have any more painful proofs, any more lasting documents of their incapacity. Since we Americans can suffer no further from them, I speak of them with the same indifference and equanimity as if they were among the dead.

WASHINGTON.

But come, come...the war is ended, God be praised! Objections have been raised against our form of government, and assertions have been added that the republican is ill adapted to a flourishing or an extensive country. We know from the experience of Carthage and of Holland that it not only can preserve but can make a country flourishing, when Nature herself has multiplied the impediments, and when the earth and all the elements have conspired against it. Demonstration is indeed yet wanting that a very extensive territory is best governed by its people: reason and sound common sense are the only vouchers. Many may fancy they have an interest in seizing what is another's, but surely no man can suppose that he has any in ruining or alienating his own.

FRANKLIN.

Confederative states, under one president, will never be all at once, or indeed in great part, deprived of their freedom.

WASHINGTON.

Adventurers may aspire to the supreme power illegally; but none can expect that the majority will sacrifice their present interests to his ambition, in any confidence or hope of greater. He never will raise a standing army, who cannot point out the probable means of paying it, which no one can do here; nor will an usurper rise up any where, unless there are mines to tempt the adventurous and avaricious, or large and well-cultivated estates to parcel out, and labourers to cultivate them, or many slaves to seduce and embody, or rich treasures to confiscate, or enemies to invade whose property may be plundered.

FRANKLIN.

The objections bear much more weightily against monarchical and mixt governments; because these, in wide dominions, are always composed of parts considerably at variance in privileges and interests, in manners and opinions, and the inhabitants of which are not unreluctant to be employed one against the other. Hence while we Americans leave our few soldiers to the states where they were levied, the kings of Europe will cautiously change the quarters of theirs, and send them into provinces as remote as possible. When they have ceased to have a home, they have ceased to have a

country; for all affinities are destroyed by breaking the nearest. Thrones are constructed on the petrifaction of the human heart.

WASHINGTON.

Lawless ambition has no chance whatever of success where there are neither great standing armies nor great national debts; (I am not speaking of usurpation but of encroachment;) where either of those exist, freedom must waste away, and perish. We are as far from this danger, as from the other.

FRANKLIN.

Excellent pens have written, I know not from what motive, that liberty is never more perfect or more safe than under a mild monarch: History teaches us the contrary. Where princes are absolute, more tyranny is committed under the mild, than under the austere: for the latter are jealous of power, and entrust it to few; the mild delegate it inconsiderately to many: and the same easiness of temper which allows them to do so, permits their ministers and those under them to abuse the trust with impunity. It has been said that in a democracy there are many despots, and that in a kingdom there can be one only. This is false: in a republic the tyrannical temper creates a check to itself in the very person next it: but in a monarchy all en-

trusted with power become tyrannical by a nod from above, whether the nod be of approbation or of drowsiness. Royalty not only is a monster of more heads, but also of more claws, and sharper. It is amusing to find us treated as visionaries. All the gravest nations have been republics, both in ancient times and in modern. The Dutch, the Venetians, the Spaniards, will always, unless an insuperable force oppresses them, aspire to the dignity of manhood; the Neapolitans and the French will dream of it and shake it off. I shall believe that a king is better than a republic, when I find that a single tooth in a head is better than a set, and that in its solitariness there is a warrant for its strength and soundness.

WASHINGTON.

Let us look forward; let us consider what our country will be, a century after our departure; for the sound sense of our people, their speculative habits, their room for enterprise around home, and their distance from Europe, ensure to them, if not a long continuance of peace, exemption from such wars as can affect in any material degree their character or their prosperity. We might have continued the hostilities until a part or even the whole of Canada had been ceded to us. The Congress has done, what, if my opinion had been asked, I should

have strongly recommended. Let Canada be ours when she is cultivated and enriched; let not the fruit be gathered prematurely; indeed let it never be plucked; let it fall when our bosom can hold it. This must happen within the century to come; for no nation is, or ever has been, so intolerably vexatious to its colonies, its dependencies, and its conquests, as the British. I have known personally several governors, many of them honest and sensible men, many of them of mild and easy character, but I never knew one, nor ever heard of any from older officers, who attempted at all to conciliate the affections, or systematically to promote the interests, of the governed. Liberality has been occasionally extended to them, but it has been the liberality of a master towards a slave, and only after grievous sufferings. Services have then been exacted, not hard perhaps in themselves, but in a manner to cancel all recollection, and deaden all sense of kindness. What greater political, what more incorrigible moral evil! The French and Spaniards act differently: they extract advantage from their undisturbed possessions, appealing to the generosity of their children, and softening their commands by kind offices and constant attentions. Wherever a French regiment is quartered, there are balls and comedies; wherever an

English, there are disturbances in the street, and duels. Give the Spaniard a bull-fight, and you may burn his father at the stake, commending him to the God of Mercy in a cassock painted with the flames of hell. The English (and we their descendants are the most deserving of the name) require but justice. Whatever comes as a favour comes as an affront. To what a pitch then must our indignation be excited, when we are not permitted even to pay that which is required of us, unless we present it with the left hand, or upon the nose, or from our knees amidst the mire! The orators of the British parliament, while they are colouring all this insolence and injustice, keep the understanding of the people at tongue's length.

FRANKLIN.

In good truth then the separation is no narrow one. I have been present while some of them have thrown up the most chaffy stuff two hours together, and have never called for a glass of water. This is contemplated as the summit of ability, and he who is capable of performing it, is deemed capable of ruling the two hemispheres. The rich families that govern this assembly have made us independent; they have given us thirteen provinces, and they will people them all for us in less

than fifty years. Religious and grave men, for none are graver or more religious than the beaten, are praising the loving-mercies of God in loosening from their necks the mill-stone of America: otherwise the national debt which has only been trebled, would have soon been quintupled. What a blessing to throw aside such an extent of coast, which of itself would have required an immense navy for its defence! No one dreams that England in confederacy with America would have been so strong in sailors, in ports, in naval stores, as to have become (I do not say with good management, I say in spite of bad) not invincible only, but invulnerable.

WASHINGTON.

If she turns her attention to the defects of her administration, in all its branches, she may recover not much less than she has lost. Look at the nations of Europe, and shew me one, despotic or free, of which so large a portion is so barbarous and wretched as the Irish. The country is more fertile than Britain; the inhabitants are healthy, strong, courageous, faithful, patriotic, and quick of apprehension. No quality is wanting, which constitutes the respectability of a state or the happiness of individuals: yet from centuries of

misrule they are in a condition more hopeless than any other nation or tribe upon the globe, civilized or savage.

FRANKLIN.

There is only one direct way to bring them into order, and that appears so rough, that it never will be trodden. The chief misery arises from the rapacity of the gentry as they are called, and the nobility, who, to avoid the trouble of collecting their rents from many poor tenants, and the greater of hearing their complaints, have leased their properties to what are called *middle-men*. These harass their inferiors in the exact ratio of their industry, and drive them into desperation. Hence slovenliness and drunkenness; for the appearance of ease and comfort is an allurement to avarice. To pacify and reclaim the people, all leases to middle-men must be annulled: every cultivator must have a lease for life, and (at the option of his successor) valid for as many years afterwards as will amount in the whole to twenty-one. The extent of ground should be proportionate to his family and his means. To underlet land should be punished by law as *regrating*. Authority would here be strongly exercised, not tyrannically, which never can be asserted of plans sanctioned by the representatives of a people, for

the great and perpetual benefit of the many, to the small and transient inconvenience of the few. Auxiliary to this reform should be one in church-livings. They should all embrace nearly the same number of communicants. Suppose three thousand souls under each cure: a fourth part would consist of the infirm and of children not yet prepared for the reception of doctrine. The service, as formerly, should be shorter, and performed thrice each Sunday; so that all might in turn be present, and that great concourse would be avoided, which frequently is the prelude to licentiousness and brutality. Abolishing tithes, selling the property of the crown, the church, and corporations, I would establish a fund sufficient to allow each clergyman, in addition to his house, one hundred and forty pounds annually. The catholic priest should have the same number of communicants, and should receive a gratuity of fifty pounds annually, and should also possess his parsonage-house: offerings and gifts, as at present, would accrue to him from the piety and gratitude of his parishioners. The church, as established by government, would be maintained in its supremacy, and the papal priest would be remunerated not for his profession, but for services done towards the state by his attention to the

morals of his communicants. If the English pay forty pounds for taking up a felon, would they not willingly pay fifty for reclaiming a dozen? I would grant eight hundred pounds yearly to each protestant bishop, obliging him to constant residence in his diocese; four of these are sufficient: I would grant two thousand to one arch-bishop. The catholics should have the same number, and their stipends should be the same; for although the priests are ignorant and vulgar men in all catholic countries, it is highly requisite for the maintenance of order, that the bishops and archbishop here should possess whatever gives authority. Knowledge in some measure gives it, but splendour in a much greater. Elagabalus would attract more notice and lead after him more followers than Lycurgus, and not merely from the lower orders but also from the higher.

WASHINGTON.

True enough: and indeed some of the wise become as the unwise in the enchanted chambers of Power, whose lamps make every face of the same colour. Gorgeousness melts all mankind into one inert mass, carrying off and confounding and consuming all beneath it, like a torrent of lava, bright amidst the darkness and dark again amidst the light.

The reductions you propose would bring about another: they would remove the necessity of a standing army in that unfortunate country, and further would enable the government to establish three companies for fisheries, the herring, the cod, and the whale. The population is already too great, and is increasing, which of itself is the worst of curses, unless when high civilization regulates it, and the superflux must be diverted by colonization, or occupied on the seas by commerce. Manufactures all tend to deteriorate the species, but begin by humanizing it. Happy those countries which have occasion for no more of them than may supply the home consumption! National debts are evils, not so much because they take away from useful and honest gains, as because they create superfluous and dishonest ones, and because, when carried as far as England would carry hers, they occasion half the children of the land to be cooped up in buildings which open into the brothel and the hospital.

In assenting to you, I interrupted your propositions; pray go on.

FRANKLIN.

I would permit no Englishman to hold in Ireland a place of trust or profit, whether in church or state. I would confer titles and offices on

those Irish gentlemen, who resided in the country on their properties: they would in time become habituated to a regular and decorous mode of life: The landlord and clergyman would in the beginning lose something of current coin; but if you consider that their lives, houses, and effects would become safe, that provisions would be plentiful in proportion to the sacrifices they made, and that in no year would their rents and incomes fail, as they now do at least twenty in each century, you would find that their situation, like the situation of their inferiors, would be much improved.

WASHINGTON.

Many would exclaim against the injustice of taking from one class alone a portion of its property as insurance-money.

FRANKLIN.

Not from one alone: all property should be protected at its own cost: this is the right and the object of all governments. The insurance is two-fold; that of the private man, and that of the community: the latter is the main consideration. I perceive nothing arbitrary, nothing novel, in its principle*. If a government exerts the power of

* There is an argument which I could not attribute to Franklin, because it is derived from an authority to which he never appealed, and the words containing it are unlikely to

taxing one trade or profession, it does the same thing or more. Suppose it should levy a tax of a hundred pounds on every man who begins the business of apothecary or lawyer, is not the grievance even heavier, as pressing on those whose gains are yet uncertain, and to be derived from others, than it would be if bearing upon those whose emoluments are fixt, and proceed from the government which regulates and circumscribes them? But they have been accustomed, you will say, to the enjoyment of more. So much clear

have lain within the range of his reading. I derive it from the *Aphorisms of Confessors*, by Emanuel Sa: p. 528.

Le Pape peut revoquer la loi etablie par lui ou par predecesseur, et oster *mesme sans occasion* les effects procedens d'icelle, et le benefice valide à un chacun: car il a entiere disposition sur les benefices.

The king of England and Ireland, as head of the church, succeeds by consent of Parliament to the disposal of benefices. He surely can do in his own kingdom, what the Pope can do in another's, where property is concerned. The religion of a state is established for the correction of its morals, and its morals are requisite to the maintenance of the laws. Religion then, in the view of a statesman, is only a thing that aids and assists the laws, removing from before them much of their painful duties, and lessening (if good and effectual) the number of their officers and executioners. So that, in political economy there is between them a close and intimate connection, and both alike are subject to regulations in them from the same authority. The salary of a clergyman should be as much subject to the state, as the stipend of a custom-house officer and exciseman.

gain for them. I hope they may have made a liberal and wise use of the superfluity. Those, who have done so, will possess minds ready to calculate justly their own lasting interests, and the interests of the community for whose benefit they have been appointed. If there is any thing the existence of which produces great and general evil, and the abolition of which will produce great and general good, in perpetuity, the government is not only authorised by right but bound by duty to remove it. Compensation should be made to the middle-men for all losses; it should be made even to the worst; these losses may as easily be ascertained as those occasioned to proprietors and tenants, through whose lands we open a road or a canal.

Methods far short of what I indicate will be adopted and will fail. Constitutional lawyers (now England is persuaded that her judicature and her parliament contains them, and even the Irish too!) will assent that Ireland be subject to martial law for thirty years in the century and to little or none for the remainder, but will not assent that every thing unlawful shall be also unnecessary, and unprovoked. In consequence of which, within the life-time of some in existence, we shall have two millions of Irishmen in America,

all reclaimed from their ferocity, by assuaging their physical and moral wants, and addicted to industry by the undisturbed enjoyment of its sweets. Experience seems to have given no sort of information to their rulers: they profit by nothing old, they venture on nothing new. If I were a member of the British ministry, I should think I acted wisely, not in attempting to prove that the constitution is the best in the world, but in demonstrating, if I could, the reverse. For in proportion as they labour to extoll it, in the same proportion do they oblige us to suppose them its most impudent and outrageous violators, or, at the least, ignorant of its spirit, and incapable of its application. Otherwise how could this excellent form be the parent of deformity? how could the population where the country is so fertile and the race so industrious contain a larger number of indigent families, and those among the most laborious and the most virtuous, than any other upon earth? Such is the beneficence of the supreme Power, unmixed evil, in its exposure to the air and heavens, may contract or produce, by a certain stimulating agency, a somewhat of good, however scantily and slowly; but evil never flows from good unmixed. If the constitution were what it is represented, its agents could not abuse

it; and if its agents could not abuse it, America would not have been, at this time, separated from England, nor would Ireland have been condemned to a massacre once at furthest in two generations; nor would the British people be more heavily taxed in its comforts and its necessaries than the Algerines and Turks, when its industry is so much greater, and when its territory has not been occupied, nor invaded, nor endangered, by an enemy. I suspect that its wars are systematical in their periods, however little so in their conduct: that they must recurr about every twenty years, as a new generation springs up from the aristocracy, for which all the great civil employments, however multiplied, are insufficient, and which disdains all other professions than the military and the naval.

The conduct of England towards us resembles that of Ebenezer Pollock towards his eldest son Jonas. Jonas had been hunting in the woods, and had contracted a rheumatism in the face, which drew it awry, and either from the pain it occasioned or from the medicines he took to cure it, rotted one of his grinders. Old Ebenezer was wealthy, had little to do, or to care about, made few observations on his family, sick or sound, and saw nothing particular in his son's countenance. However one day after dinner, when he had eaten

heartily, he said to Jonas, " Son Jonas, methinks thy appetite is not over-keen: pick and welcome the other half of that hog's-foot."

"Father," answered he, "I have had a pain in my tooth the last fortnight; the northerly wind does it no good today: I would rather, if so be that you approve of it, eat a slice of yon fair cheesecake in the closet."

" Why what ails the tooth?" said Ebenezer.

"Nothing more," replied Jonas, " than that I cannot chew with it what I used to chew."

"Drive a nail in the wall," quoth stoutly and courageously Ebenezer, "tie a string to one end and lace the other round thy tooth."

The son performed a part of the injunction, but could not very dexterously twist the string around the grinder, for his teeth were close and the cord not over-fine. Then said the father kindly, " Open thy mouth, lad! give me the twine: back thy head: back it, I tell thee, over the chair."

"Not that, father, not that...the next," cried Jonas.

"What dost mean?" proudly and impatiently said Ebenezer. " Is not the string about it? dost hold my hand too, scape-grace? dost give me all this trouble for nought?"

"Patience now, father," meekly said Jonas, with the cord across his tongue..."let me draw my tooth my own way."

"Follow thine own courses, serpent!" indignantly exclaimed Ebenezer..."as God's in Boston, thou art a most wilful and undutiful child."

"I hope not, father."

"Hope not! rebel! Did not I beget thee, and thy teeth, one and all? have not I lodged thee, cloathed thee, and fed thee, these forty years, come Candlemas? and now, I warrant ye, all this bustle and backwardness about a rotten tooth! should I be a groat the richer for it, out or in?"

WASHINGTON.

Dignity in private men and in governments has been little else, than a stately and stiff perseverance in oppression; and spirit, as it is called, little else than the foam of hard-mouthed insolence. Such at last is become the audacity of Power, from a century or more of holidays or riot, it now complains that you deprive it of its prerogative, if you limit the exercise of its malignant passions. I lament that there are those who can learn no lesson of humanity, unless we write it broadly with the point of the sword.

FRANKLIN.

Let us hope however that we may see the

day, when these scholars shall be turned out of school.

I understand that some remarks on the government of the church in Ireland have been offered to Parliament, I know not by what Scotch member, much resembling those which I attribute to Franklin. The dialogue was sent to England for publication long before, but although I required no participation of profit by it, some printers were reluctant to undertake it from the unfashionableness of the sentiments, and others from the obscurity of the author. It has passed through several hands; so that many things, it is reasonable to suppose, may have transpired, partly from the extravagance of the matter, and partly from the peculiarity of the style. What has been represented to me as the most visionary and absurd, is, the supposition that the catholic church in England, or elsewhere, could ever admitt any directing power which emanates not from the bishop of Rome.

I would dogmatize with none; I would dispute with few: instead of either, I transcribe some sentiments from Carrion, a catholic author...Itaque instituit Gregorius *per cæremonias Ecclesiæ statum in concordiam revocare.* Orta est et *contentio* hoc tempore de *primatu:* voluit enim Mauritius Cæsar, ut patriarcha Constantinopolitanus *œcumenicus, sive Episcopus universalis, in Ecclesiâ christianâ diceretur.* Sed Gregorius id suo adsensu comprobare non voluit, et christianâ constantiâ usus scripsit, *Neminem id sibi arrogare debere ut inter Christianos Episcopus universalis velit nominari.* Anno Christi DLXXXIV. Chron: lib. iv. p. 272. Venetiis ad signum Spei 1548.

Bonifacius the third obtained from the emperor Phocas, who had assassinated his master and benefactor Mauritius, that he should be styled Œcumenicus or Universal Bishop. It is worthy of remark, that the popes have obtained every

fresh accession of power from usurpers; and that for the first six hundred years, however dark and turbulent, they abstained from those pretensions which they have since so pertinaciously asserted. The ambition of Bonifacius raised up that of a much wiser and still bolder impostor. The churches of the east received with scorn and anger the intelligence of this usurpation; and the spirit of discord, which never breathed so violently and so uninterruptedly in any other religion, and which has not intermitted one moment in the eighteen hundred years since peace and goodwill towards man was first preached upon earth, induced an Arab to collect a few of his countrymen, disbanded and defrauded by Heraclius, and to preach to them plainer doctrines. Provinces, kingdoms, empires, yielded to him; and while Arians and Catholics were fighting for Christ against the command of Christ, the more populous, warlike, and civilized part of the world revolted from both standards. In that which still countenances the system, about a sixth of the wealth is possessed by the clergy, for teaching what every mother is capable of inculcating, and what Christ taught plainly once for all. To favour the establishment of this order, it was necessary to reverse the prophecy of Isaiah; instead of making the rough smooth, to make the smooth rough, and to excite disputes on words, unintelligible and unimportant. Hence we find perpetually the terms, *pernicious* errors, *impious* doctrines, *execrable* heresies; but are rarely told of the perniciousness, impiety, and execrableness of cruelty, malice, falsehood, lust, ambition. Hence the people are not permitted to read the precepts of Christ, but are ordered to believe the legend of Saint *Hankerchief* or Saint *Eleventhousand*, to embrace the holy faith of an enthusiast who gravely tells us he believes a thing because it is impossible, and to place the same confidence in a lying old dotard who asserts that he filed his teeth in order to speak Hebrew.

While there are religious establishments paid by the people, against their consent, or even partially with it, there will always be dissatisfaction and discontent. Unhappily most of Christ's doctrines are superseded: there is one which was

never in fashion, and which, where all are good, is among the best: *Commune with thine own heart in thy chamber, and be still.* This, if attended to, would put the bishops' bench on three legs; but it would empty our poor-houses, fill our manufactories, and pay our debt.

When certain men are loudest, they feel least. Indeed there is a great deal less bigotry in the world, than is usually supposed, and a great deal more insincerity. Our faith is of little moment to those who declame against it; they are angry, not at our blindness, as they call it, but that the blind man will trust his own dog and staff rather than theirs, and, above all, that he will carry the scrip. This is wilfulness in him; they would fain open his eyes to save him from the sin of such wilfulness; and they break him a limb or two because he will not take them for his oculists.

Love of power resides in the heart of every man, and is well regulated and discreet in few. Accompanied by genius, it is also too frequently accompanied by pride and arrogance. Although it assumes to itself the highest character, it is really among the weakest of our affections. Those who differ from the domineering party are always stigmatized by them with the name of sectaries; and what reflecting man has not remarked the force that lies in a name? Yet when the Pope called Luther a sectary, a little learning would have shewn him that the title better suited himself, and that, according to Cato the elder, *Sectarius porcus est qui gregem præcedens ducit.*

CONVERSATION III.

ROGER ASCHAM

AND

THE LADY JANE GREY.

ROGER ASCHAM

AND

THE LADY JANE GREY.

ASCHAM.

Thou art going, my dear young lady, into a most awful state; thou art passing into matrimony and great wealth. God hath willed it so: submitt in thankfulness.

Thy affections are rightly placed and well distributed. Love is a secondary passion in those who love most, a primary in those who love least. He who is inspired by it in a great degree, is inspired by honour in a greater: it never reaches its plenitude of growth and perfection, but in the most exalted minds... Alas! alas!

JANE.

What aileth my virtuous Ascham? what is amiss? why do I tremble?

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ASCHAM.

I see perils on perils which thou dost not see, although thou art wiser than thy poor old master. And it is not because Love hath blinded thee, for that surpasseth his supposed omnipotence, but it is because thy tender heart having always leaned affectionately upon good, hath felt and known nothing of evil.

I once persuaded thee to reflect much; let me now persuade thee to avoid the habitude of reflection, to lay aside books, and to gaze carefully and stedfastly on what is under and before thee.

JANE.

I have well bethought me of all my duties: O how extensive they are! what a goodly and fair inheritance! But tell me, wouldst thou command me never more to read Cicero and Epictetus and Polybius? the others I do resign unto thee: they are good for the arbour and for the gravel-walk: but leave unto me, I beseech thee, my friend and father, leave unto me, for my fireside and for my pillow, truth, eloquence, courage, constancy.

ASCHAM.

Read them on thy marriagebed, on thy child-bed, on thy deathbed! Thou spotless undrooping lily, they have fenced thee right well! These

are the men for men: these are to fashion the bright and blessed creatures, O Jane, whom God one day shall smile upon in thy chaste bosom.... Mind thou thy husband.

JANE.

I sincerely love the youth who hath espoused me; I love him with the fondest, the most solicitous affection. I pray to the Almighty for his goodness and happiness, and do forget at times, unworthy supplicant! the prayers I should have offered for myself. O never fear that I will disparage my kind religious teacher, by disobedience to my husband in the most trying duties.

ASCHAM.

Gentle is he, gentle and virtuous: but time will harden him: time must harden even thee, sweet Jane! Do thou, complacently and indirectly, lead him from ambition.

JANE.

He is contented with me and with home.

ASCHAM.

Ah Jane, Jane! men of high estate grow tired of contentedness.

JANE.

He told me he never liked books unless I read them to him. I will read them to him every evening: I will open new worlds to him, richer

than those discovered by the Spaniard; I will conduct him to treasures...O what treasures!...on which he may sleep in innocence and peace.

ASCHAM.

Rather do thou walk with him, ride with him, play with him, be his faery, his page, his every thing that love and poetry have invented; but watch him well, sport with his fancies; turn them about like the ringlets round his cheeks; and if ever he meditate on power, go, toss up thy baby to his brow, and bring back his thoughts into his heart by the music of thy discourse.

Teach him to live unto God and unto thee: and he will discover that women, like the plants in woods, derive their softness and tenderness from the shade.

CONVERSATION IV.

LORD BACON

AND

RICHARD HOOKER.

LORD BACON

AND

RICHARD HOOKER.

BACON.

HEARING much of your worthiness and wisdom, master Richard Hooker, I have besought your comfort and consolation in this my too heavy affliction: for we often do stand in need of hearing what we know full well, and our own balsams must be poured into our breasts by another's hand. Withdrawn as you live from court and courtly men, and having ears occupied by better reports than such as are flying about me, yet haply so hard a case as mine, befalling a man heretofore not averse from the studies in which you also take delight, may have touched you with some concern.

HOOKER.

I do think, my lord of Verulam, that, un-

happy as you appear, God in sooth has foregone to chasten you, and that the day which in his wisdom he appointed for your trial, was the very day on which the king's majesty gave unto your ward and custody the great seal of his English realm. And yet perhaps it may be, let me utter it without offence, that your features and stature were from that day forward no longer what they were before. Such an effect do power and rank and office produce even on prudent and religious men.

A hound's whelp howleth if you pluck him up above where he stood: man, in much greater peril of falling, doth rejoice. You, my lord, as befitteth you, are smitten and contrite, and do appear in deep wretchedness and tribulation, to your servants and those about you; but I know that there is always a balm which lies uppermost in these afflictions, and that no heart rightly softened can be very sore.

BACON.

And yet, master Richard, it is surely no small matter, to lose the respect of those who looked up to us for countenance, and the favour of a right learned king, and, O master Hooker! such a power of money! But money is mere dross. I should always hold it so, if it possessed not two qualities;

that of making men treat us reverently, and that of enabling us to help the needy.

HOOKER.

The respect, I think, of those who respect us for what a fool can give and a rogue can take away, may easily be dispensed with: but it is indeed a high prerogative to help the needy; and when it pleases the Almighty to deprive us of it, let us believe that he foreknows our inclination to negligence in the charge entrusted to us, and that in his mercy he has removed from us a most fearful responsibility.

BACON.

I know a number of poor gentlemen to whom I could have rendered aid.

HOOKER.

Have you examined and sifted their worthiness?

BACON.

Well and deeply.

HOOKER.

Then must you have known them long before your adversity, and while the means of succouring them were in your hands.

BACON.

You have circumvented and entrapped me, master Hooker. Faith! I am mortified...you the schoolman, I the schoolboy!

HOOKER.

Say not so, my lord. Your years and wisdom are abundantly more than mine, your knowledge higher, your experience richer. Our wits are not always in blossom upon us. When the roses are overcharged and languid, up springs a spike of rue. Mortified on such an occasion! God forefend it! But again to the business...I should never be over-penitent for my neglect of needy gentlemen, who have neglected themselves much worse. They have chosen their profession with its chances and contingences. If they had protected their country by their courage, or adorned it by their studies, they would have merited, and, under a king of such learning and such equity, would have received in some sort their reward. I look upon them as so many old cabinets of ivory and tortoiseshell, scratched, flawed, splintered, rotten, defective both within and without, hard to unlock, insecure to lock up again, unfit to use.

BACON.

Methinks it beginneth to rain, master Richard. What if we comfort our bodies with a small cup of wine against the ill temper of the air.

Wherefor in God's name are you affrightened?

HOOKER.

Not so, my lord, not so.

BACON.

What then affects you?

HOOKER.

Why indeed, since your lordship interrogates me...I looked, idly and imprudently, into that rich buffette; and I saw, unless the haze of the weather has come into the parlour, or my sight is the worse for last night's reading, no fewer than six silver pints. Surely six tables for company are laid only at coronations.

BACON.

There are many men so squeamish, that forsooth they would keep a cup to themselves, and never communicate it to their neighbour or best friend; a fashion which seems to me offensive in an honest house, where no disease of ill repute ought to be feared. We have lately, master Richard, adopted strange fashions; we have run into the wildest luxuries. The lord Leicester, I heard it from my father...God forefend it should ever be recorded in our history...when he entertained queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth-castle, laid before her Majesty a fork of pure silver. I the more easily credit it, as master Thomas Coriatt doth vouch for having seen the same monsterous sign of voluptuousness at Venice. We are surely the especial favorites of Providence, when such wan-

tonness hath not melted us quite away. After this portent, it would otherwise have appeared incredible, that we should have broken the Spanish Armada!

Pledge me: hither comes our wine.

Dolt! villain! is not this the beverage I reserve for myself?

The blockhead must imagine that malmsey runs in a stream under the ocean, like the Alpheus. Bear with me, good master Hooker, but verily I have little of this wine, and I keep it as a medicine for my many, and growing infirmities. You are younger; weaker drink is more wholesome for you. The lighter ones of France are best of all accommodated by Nature to our constitutions, and therefor she hath placed them so within our reach, that we have only to stretch out our necks, in a manner, and drink them from the vat. But this malmsey, this malmsey, flies from centre to circumference, and makes youthful blood to boil.

HOOKER.

Of a truth, my knowledge in such matters is but spare. My lord of Canterbury once ordered part of a goblet containing some strong Spanish wine to be taken to me from his table, when I dined by sufference with his chaplains, and although a most discreet prudent man, as befitteth his high station,

was not so chary of my health as your lordship. Wine is little to be trifled with, physic less. The Cretans, the brewers of this malvasy, have many aromatic and very powerful herbs amongst them. On their mountains, and notably on Ida, grows that dittany which works such marvels, and which perhaps may give activity to this hot medicinal drink of theirs. I would not touch it, knowingly: an unregarded leaf dropped into it above the ordinary might add such puissance to the concoction as almost to break the buckles in my shoes: since we have good and valid authority, that the wounded hart, on eating thereof, casts the arrow out of his haunch or entrails, although it stuck a palm deep.

BACON.

When I read of such things I doubt them. Religion and politics belong to God, and to God's vicegerent the king: we must not touch upon them unadvisedly: but if I could procure a plant of dittany on easy terms, I would persuade my apothecary and my gamekeeper to make some experiments.

HOOKER.

I dare not distrust what grave writers have declared, in matters beyond my knowledge.

BACON.

Good master Hooker, I have read many of your reasonings, and they are admirably well sustained: added to which, your genius has given such a strong current to your language, as can come only from a mighty elevation and a most abundant plenteousness. Yet forgive me, in God's name, my worthy master, if you descried in me some expression of wonder at your simplicity. We are all weak and vulnerable somewhere: common men in the higher parts; heroes, as was feigned of Achilles, in the lower. You would define to a hair's breadth, the qualities, states, and dependencies, of Principalities, Dominations, and Powers; you would be unerring about the Apostles and the Churches; and 'tis wonderful how you wander about a potherb.

HOOKER.

I know my poor weak intellects, most noble lord, and how scantily they have profited by all my hard painstaking. Comprehending few things, and those imperfectly, I say only what others have said before, wise men and holy; and if, by passing through my heart into the wide world around me, it pleaseth God that this little treasure shall have lost nothing of its weight and pureness, my exulta-

tion is then the exultation of humility. Wisdom consisteth not in knowing many things; nor even in knowing them thoroughly; but in choosing and in following what conduces the most certainly to our lasting happiness and true glory. And this wisdom, my lord of Verulam, cometh from above.

BACON.

I have observed, among the well informed and the ill informed, nearly the same quantity of infirmities and follies: those who are rather the wiser keep them separate, and those who are wisest of all keep them better out of sight. Now examine the sayings and writings of the prime philosophers; and you will often find them, master Richard, to be untruths made to resemble truths: the business with them is to approximate as nearly as possible and not to touch it: the goal of the charioteer is *evitata fervidis rotis*, as some poet saith. But we who care nothing for chaunts and cadences, and have no time to catch at applauses, push forward over stones and sands straitway to our object. I have persuaded men, and shall persuade them for ages, that I possess a wide range of thoughts unexplored by others and first thrown open by me, with many fair inclosures of choice and abstruse knowledge. I have incited and instructed them

to examine all subjects of useful and rational inquiry: very few that occurred to me have I myself left untouched or untried. One however hath almost escaped me, and surely one worth the trouble.

HOOKER.

Pray, my lord, if I am guilty of no indiscretion, what may it be?

BACON.

Francis Bacon.

Lest it be thought that authority is wanting for the strong expression of Hooker on the effects of dittany, I referr the reader to the curious treatise of Plutarch on the reasoning faculties of animals, in which, near the end, he asks "Who instructed the deer, wounded by the Cretan arrow, to seek for dittany? on the tasting of which herb, the bolts fall immediately from their bodies."

I do not remember to have read in other authors that the effect is quite so instantaneous; and I have not leisure for an index-hunt,.. a good half-hour's work.

CONVERSATION V.

GENERAL LASCY

AND

THE CURATE MERINO

GENERAL LASCY

AND

THE CURATE MERINO.

MERINO.

General, we have fought in the same cause, and I shall be sorry if our sentiments at last diverge. What is peace, if there be not concord?

LASCY.

Enthusiasm makes way for reflection, and reflection leads to that concord which we both desire. We think first of our wrongs, and afterwards of our rights. Injustice may become, where there is anything to be stirred, a lighter evil to the sufferer than to the worker.

MERINO.

We talk of the people and of parliaments, and, as it appears to me, are blindly following the restless and changeful French. In fact we are ready in our politics to build up a tower of Babel. Shall these miscreants persuade us that they are the

cleverest people in the world, by sweetening us a cup of chocolate with a bunch of turnips or a truss of hay, or by whipping us off a leg while we are saying an ave-maria. Let them instruct us in surgery and chemistry, but let them always be considered as our inferiors in morality and government.

LASCY.

Here, señor Curado, we agree perfectly. Prosperity has made them so giddy, adversity cannot sober them. The varnish, that once covered their sharp and shallow character, cracked off in the dogdays of the revolution, and they have lost the greatest of their virtues, their hypocrisy. Although I have fought against them and against their partisans, while they were under the same banners, yet I would gladly see all Spaniards in amity and at home. The French faction, as you call it, fought for the same object as we did.

MERINO.

How! they fought for our beloved Ferdinand!

LASCY.

They fought for our beloved Spain, for her independence, for her freedom. Ought they to be persecuted, because they were betrayed? Should we murder a man, because he has fallen into a pit? or starve him to death, because he has gone

for bread to another baker than ours? and liberty is surely, like bread, an article of the first necessity to a Spaniard.

MERINO.

They followed not their lawful king.

LASCY.

Did we? did any wise man? did not all implore him to remain? did not all deprecate and detest that lowest of degradation, which he neither scorned nor shunned, but ran into and courted?

MERINO.

It was God's will. As for those rebels, the finger of God...

LASCY.

Prythee, señor Curado, let God's finger alone. Very worthy men are apt to snatch at it upon too light occasions: they would stop their tobacco-pipes with it, if they could. If Spain, in the opinion of our late opponents, could have obtained a free constitution by other means, they never would have joined the French. True, they persisted: but how few have wisdom or courage enough to make the distinction between retracting an error and deserting a cause! He who declares himself a party-man, let his party profess the most liberal sentiments, is a registered and enlisted slave: he begins by being a zealot, and ends by being a

dupe: he is tormented by regret and anger; yet is he incapable, from shame and irresolution, of throwing off the badge and livery under which he sweats and fumes, as though under the empoisoned garment of the Centaur.

MERINO.

How much better is it to abolish all parties, by fixing a legitimate king at the head of affairs!

LASCY.

The object, thank God, is accomplished. Ferdinand is returning to Madrid, if perverse men do not mislead him.

MERINO.

And yet there are Spaniards mad enough to talk of cortes and chambers of peers.

LASCY.

Of the latter I know nothing: but I know that Spain formerly was great, free, and happy, by the administration of her cortes; and as I preferr in policy old experiments to new ones, I should not be sorry, if the madness, as you call it, spread in that direction.

There are many forms of government, but only two kinds; the free and the despotic: in the one the people has its representatives, in the other not. Freedom, to be, must be perfect: the half-free can no more exist, than the half-entire. Re-

straints laid by a people on itself are sacrifices made to Liberty, and it never exerts a more beneficent or a greater power than in imposing them. The nation that pays taxes without its own consent is under slavery: whosoever causes, whosoever maintains, that slavery, subverts or abets the subversion of social order. Whoever is above the law is out of the law, just as evidently as whoever is above this room is out of this room. If men will outlaw themselves by overt actions, we are not to condemn those who remove them by the means least hazardous to the public peace. If even my daughter brought forth a monster, I could not arrest the arm that should smother it: and monsters of this kind are by infinite degrees less pernicious, than such as rise up in society by violation of law.

In regard to a chamber of peers, Spain does not contain the materials. What has been the education of our grandees? how narrow the space between the hornbook and the sanbenito! The English are amazed and the French are indignant that we have not imitated their constitutions. All constitutions formed for the French are provisionary. Whether they tripp or tumble, whether they stepp or slide, the tendency is direct to slavery: none but a most rigid government will

restrain them from cruelty or from mischief: they are scourged into good humour, and starved into content. I have read whatever I could find written on the English constitution. It appears to me, like the Deity, an object universally venerated, but requiring a Revelation. I do not find the house of peers, as I expected to find it, standing between the king and people. Throughout a long series of years it has been only twice in opposition to the Commons: once in declaring that the slave-trade ought not to be abolished; again in declaring that those who believed in transubstantiation were unfit to command an army or to decide a cause.

MERINO.

Into what extravagances does infidelity lead men, otherwise not unwise! Blessed virgin of the thousand pains, and great Santiago of Compostella, deign to bring that benighted nation back again to the right path!

LASCY.

On deity we reason by attributes, on government by metaphors. Wool or sand, embodied, may deaden the violence of what is discharged against the walls of a city: hereditary aristocracy has no such virtue against the assaults of despotism, which on the contrary it will maintain in op-

position to the people; since its power and wealth, although they are given *by* the king, must be given *from* the nation, and the latter has not an interest in enriching it, the former has. All the countries that ever have been conquered, have been surrendered to the conqueror by the aristocracy, which stipulates for its own property, power, and rank, yielding up the men, cattle, and metals, on the common. Nevertheless in every nation the project of an upper chamber will be warmly cherished. The richer aspire to honours, the poorer to protection. Every family of wealth and respectability wishes to count a peer among its relatives, and, where the whole number is yet under nomination, every one may hope it. Those who have no occasion for protectors desire the power of protecting, and those who have occasion for them desire them to be more efficient.

You would imagine that the British peers have given their names to beneficent institutions, wise laws, and flourishing colonies: no such thing: in stead of which, a slice of meat between two slices of bread derives its name from one, a tumble of heels over head, a feat performed by beggar-boys on the roads, from another. The former, I presume, was a practical commentator on the Roman fable of the belly and the members, and maintained

with all his power and interest the supremacy of the nobler part; and the latter was of a family, in which the head notoriously was lighter than the legs. Others divide their titles with a waistcoat, a bonnet, and a boot; the more illustrious with some island inhabited by sea-calves.

MERINO.

I deprecate such importations into our monarchy. God forbid that the ermine of his Catholic Majesty be tagged with the sordid tail of such a rough monster as feudality.

LASCY.

If kings, whether by reliance on external force, by introduction of external institutions, or by misapplication of what they may possess within the realm, shew a disposition to conspire with other kings against its rights, it may be expected that communities will, some secretly and others openly, unite their moral, their intellectual, and, when opportunity permits it, their physical powers against them. If alliances are holy, entered into upon the very soil just usurped, surely not unholy are those which are formed for defence against all kinds and all methods of spoliation. If men are marked out for banishment, for imprisonment, for slaughter, because they assert the rights and defend the liberties of their country, can you wonder

at seeing, as you must ere long, the confederacy of all free countries, formed for the apprehension or extinction of whoever pays, disciplines, or directs, under whatsoever title, those tremendous masses of human kind, which consume the whole produce of their native land in depopulating another? Is it iniquitous or unnatural, that laws be opposed to edicts, and constitutions to despotism? O señor Merino, there are yet things holy: all the barbarians and all the autocrats in the universe cannot make that word a byword to the Spaniard. Yes, there may be holy alliances; and the hour strikes for their establishment. This beautiful earth, these heavens in their magnificence and splendour, have seen things more lovely and more glorious than themselves. The throne of God is a speck of darkness, if you compare it with the heart, that beats only, and beats constantly, to pour forth its blood for the preservation of our country. Invincible Spain! how many of thy children have laid this pure sacrifice on the altar! The Deity has accepted it...and there are those who would cast its ashes into the winds.

If ever a perverseness of character, or the perfidy taught in courts, should induce a king of Spain to violate his oath, to massacre his subjects, to proscribe his friends, to imprison his defenders, to

abolish the representation of the people, Spain will be drawn by resentment to do what Policy in vain has whispered in the ear of Generosity. She and Portugal will be one; nor will she be sensible of any disgrace in exchanging a prince of French origin for a prince of Portuguese.

MERINO.

Educated as kings are, we cannot wonder if they see a chimera in a popular assembly.

LASCY.

Those who refuse to their people a national and just representation, calling it a chimera, will one day remember that he who purchases their affections at the price of a chimera, purchases them cheaply: and those who, having promised the boon, retract it, will put their hand to the signature, directed by a hand of iron. State after state comes forward in asserting its rights, as wave follows wave; each acting upon each; and the tempest is gathering in regions where no murmur or voice is audible. Portugal pants for freedom, in other words is free. With one foot in England and the other in Brazil, there was danger in withdrawing either: she appears however to have recovered her equipoise. Accustomed to fix her attention upon England, wisely will she act if she imitates her example in the union with Ire-

land; an union which ought to cause no other regret than in having been celebrated so late. If on the contrary she believes that national power and prosperity are the peculiar gifts of independence, she must believe that England was more powerful and prosperous in the days of her heptarchy than fifty years ago. Algarve would find no more advantage in her independence of Portugal, than Portugal would find in continuing detached from the other portions of the peninsula. There were excellent reasons for declaring her independence at the time; there now are better, if better be possible, for a coalition. She, like ourselves, is in danger of losing her colonies: how can either party by any other means retrieve its loss? Normandy and Britanny, after centuries of war, joined the other provinces of France: more centuries of severer war would not sunder them. We have no such price to pay. Independence is always the sentiment that follows liberty; and unfortunately it is always the most ardently desired by that country, which, supposing the administration of law to be similar and equal, derives the greatest advantage from the union. According to the state of society in two countries, to the justice or injustice of government, to proximity or distance, independence

may be good or bad. Normandy and Britanny would have found it hurtful and pernicious: they would have been corrupted by bribery, and overrun by competitors, the more formidable and the more disastrous from a parity of force. They had not however so weighty reasons for an union with France, as Portugal has with Spain.

MERINO.

To avoid the collision of king and people, I wish an assembly to be composed of the higher clergy and principal nobility.

LASCY.

What should produce any collision, any dissension or dissidence between king and people? Is all the wisdom of a nation less than an individual's? Can *it* not see its own interests? and ought *he* to see any other? Surround the throne with state and lustre, but withhold from it the means of corruption, which must overflow upon itself, and sapp it. To no intent or purpose can they ever be employed, unless to subvert the constitution; and beyond the paling of a constitution a king is *feræ naturæ*. Look at Russia and Turkey: how few of their czars and sultans have died a natural death! unless indeed in such a state of society the most natural death of all is a violent one. I would not accustom

men to daggers and poisons; for which reason, among others, I would remove them as far as possible from despotism.

To talk of France is nugatory: England then, where more causes are tried within the year, than among us within ten, has only twelve judges, criminal and civil, in her ordinary courts. A culprit, or indeed an innocent man, may lie three months in prison before his trial, on suspicion of having stolen a petticoat or pair of slippers. As for her civil laws, they are more contradictory, more dilatory, more complicated, more uncertain, more expensive, more inhumane, than any now in use among men. All who appeal to them for redress of injury, suffer an aggravation of it; and when Justice comes down at last, she alights on ruins. Public opinion is the only bulwark against oppression, and the voice of wretchedness is upon most occasions too feeble to excite it.

MERINO.

Democracy itself must be contented with the principal features of the English constitution. The great leaders are not taken from the ancient families.

LASCY.

These push forward into parliament young per-

sons of the best talents they happen to pick up, whether at a ball or an opera, at a gaming-table or a college-mess, who from time to time, according to the offices they have filled, mount into the upper chamber and make room for others: but it is understood that in both chambers they shall distribute honours and places at the command of their patrons. True indeed, the ostensible heads are not of ancient or even of respectable parentage. The more wealthy and powerful peers send them from their boroughs into the house of commons, as they send race-horses from their stables to Newmarket, and cocks from their training-yards to Doncaster. This is, in like manner, a pride, a luxury, a speculation. Even bankrupts have been permitted to sit there, men who, when they succeeded, were a curse to their country, worse than when they failed*.

Let us rather collect together our former institutions, cherish all that brings us proud remembrances, brace our limbs for the efforts we must make, train our youth on our own arena, and

* The opinions on our house of Commons which I have attributed to Lascy, are those of a contemptuous Spaniard, not perfectly well informed: we know better; but his character required them so. My own veneration for that assembly may be found expressed at the conclusion of the third Dialogue.

never deem it decorous to imitate the limp of a wrestler writhing in his decrepitude.

The chamber of peers in England is the dormitory of Freedom and of Genius. Those who enter it have eaten the lotus and forget their country. A minister, to suit his purposes, may make a dozen, or a score, or a hundred, of peers in a day: if they are rich they are inactive; if they are poor they are dependent. In general he chooses the rich, who always want something; for wealth is less easy to satisfy than poverty, luxury than hunger: he can dispense with their energy if he can obtain their votes, and they never abandon him unless he has contented them.

MERINO.

Impossible! that any minister should make twenty, or even ten peers, during one convocation.

LASCY.

The English, by a most happy metaphor, call them *batches*, seeing so many drawn forth at a time with all the rapidity of loaves from an oven, and moulded to the same ductility by less manipulation. A minister in that system has equally need of the active and the passive, as the creation has equally need of males and females. Do not imagine I would discredit or depreciate the house of peers: never will another land contain one com-

posed of characters in general more honorable; more distinguished for knowledge, for charity, for generosity, for equity; more perfect in all the duties of men and citizens. Let it stand; a nation should be accustomed to no changes, to no images, but of strength and duration: let it stand then, as a lofty and ornamental belfry, never to be taken down or lowered, until it threatens by its decay the congregation underneath: but let none be excommunicated who refuse to copy it, whether from faultiness in their foundation, or from deficiency in their materials. Different countries require different governments. Is the rose the only flower in the garden? is Hesperus the only star in the heavens?

England in the last twenty years has undergone a much greater revolution than any she struggled to counteract: a revolution more awful, more pernicious, more hopeless. Half a century ago she was represented chiefly by her country-gentlemen: Pitt made the richer peers, the intermediate pensioners, the poorer exiles; and his benches were overflowed with honourables from the sugar-cask and indigo-bag. He changed all the features both of mind and matter. Old mansions were converted into workhouses and barracks: children who returned from school at the holidays, stopped

in their own villages and asked why they stopped. More oaks followed him than ever followed Orpheus; and more stones, a thousand to one, leaped down at his voice than ever leaped up at Amphion's. The weakest of mortals was omnipotent in parliament: he dreamed in his drunkenness that he could compress the spirit of the times, and he rendered the wealthiest of nations the most distressed. The spirit of the times is only to be made useful by catching it as it rises, to be managed only by concession, to be controlled only by compliancy. Like the powerful agent of late discovery, that impells vast masses across the ocean or raises them from the abysses of the earth, it performs everything by attention, nothing by force, and is fatal not only from coercion but from neglect. That government is the best which the people obey the most willingly and the most wisely: that state of society, in which the greatest number may live and educate their families becomingly, by unrestrained bodily, and unrestrained intellectual exertion; where superiority in office springs from worth, and where the chief magistrate has no higher interest in perspective, than the ascendency of the laws. Nations are not ruined by wars: for convents and churches, palaces and cities are not nations. The Messenians and Jews and Arau-

canians saw their houses and temples levelled with the pavement: the mightiness of the crash gave the stronger mind a fresh impulse, and it sprang high above the flames that consumed the last fragment. The ruin of a country is not the blight of corn, nor the weight and impetuosity of hailstones; it is not inundation nor storm, it is not pestilence nor famine; a few years, perhaps a single one, may cover all traces of such calamity: but that country is too surely ruined, in which morals are lost irretrievably to the greater part of the rising generation; and there are they about to sink and perish, where the ruler has given, by an unrepressed and an unreproved example, the lesson of bad faith.

MERINO.

Sir, I cannot hear such language.

LASCY.

Why then converse with me? Is the fault mine if such language be offensive? Why should intolerance hatch an hypothesis, or increase her own alarm by the obstreperous chuckle of incubation?

MERINO.

Kings stand in the place of God amongst us.

LASCY.

I wish they would make way for the owner. They love God only when they fancy he has

favoured their wild passions, and fear him only when they must buy him off. If indeed they be his vicegerents on earth, let them repress the wicked and exalt the virtuous. Wherever in the material world there is a grain of gold, it sinks to the bottom; chaff floats over it: in the animal, the greatest and most sagacious of creatures hide themselves in woods and caverns, in morasses and in solitudes, and we hear first of their existence when we find their bones. Do you perceive a resemblance anywhere? If princes are desirous to imitate the Governor of the universe, if they are disposed to obey him, if they consult religion or reason, or, what oftener occupies their attention, the stability of power, they will admitt the institutions best adapted to render men honest and peaceable, industrious and contented. Otherwise, let them be certain that, although they themselves may escape the chastisement they merit, their children and granchildren will never be out of danger or out of fear. Calculations on the intensity of force are often just, hardly ever so those on its durability.

MERINO.

As if truly that depended on men! a blow against a superintending Providence! It always

follows the pestilential breath that would sully the majesty of kings.

LASCY.

Señor Merino, my name, if you have forgotten it, is Lascy: take courage and recollect yourself. The whole of my discourse has tended to keep the majesty of kings unsullied by preserving their honour inviolate. Any blow against a superintending Providence is too insane for reproach, too impotent for pity: and indeed what peril can by any one be apprehended for the Almighty, when he has the curate Merino to preach for him and the Holy Inquisition to protect him?

MERINO.

I take my leave, general. May your Excellency live many years!... I breathe the pure street-air again... Traitor and atheist! I will denounce him: he has shaved for the last time: he shall never have Christian burial.

I wrote an inscription for the cenotaph of Lascy, which I will insert here, together with some others composed for those who have fallen the first victims of the Holy Alliance or its priests.

Pro Cœnotaphio Lacii ducis.

IN . MINORE . BALEARIUM . JACET . CORPUS . LACII
PRAECLARI . DUCIS . VIRI . INTEGERRIMI
CUJUS . SI . PATRIAM . ET . RES . GESTAS
ET . GERENDARUM . CONSIDERES . CAUSAS
NECESSE . NON . EST . ADDERE
FUISSE . REGIO . FERNANDI . JUSSU
QUEM . SALVUM . FECERAT . INTEREMPTUM
HOC . HABE . LECTOR
QUOD . PERCUSSORIBUS . ET . REGE . VIVENTIBUS
UBI . DEBET . INSCRIBI . NON . POTEST
VOS . AUTEM . QUI . VOBIS . LIBERTATEM
IN . ALTERA . TERRARUM . PARTE . VINDICATIS
RECORDAMINI . HUNC . MERITIS . VESTRUM . ESSE
ATQUE . ITA . VOS . ET . CONJUGES . ET . LIBEROS
JUVET . DEUS
STATUAM . EJUS . PRO . FOCIS . PONITOTE.

Pro Cœnotaphio Porlierii ducis.

SUB . MARMORE . HOC . JACERET
SI . SINERET . REX . FERNANDUS
CADAVER . TRUNCUM . PORLIERII
PRO . EODEM . REGE . DIMICABAT . QUI
DUM . E . TYRANNI . VICINI . COGNATIS
IN . MATRIMONIUM . DARI . QUAMLIBET . SIBI . PETERET
DOLO . CAPTUS . EST . ET . GALLIAM . VI . ABDUCTUS
GALLICO . EXERCITU . A . BRITANNIS . DELETO
IPSO . AUTEM . FERNANDO . LIBERATO
JURAVIT . LEGES . PATRIAE . PRISTINAS . RESTITUERE
NE . FALSO . JURARET . REX
PUGNATURUS . ERAT . ITERUM . PORLIERIUS
QUAEDAM . EST . PRUDENTIA
QUAE . NEC . STRENUIS . NEC . PROBIS
CONVENIT . ET . PORLIERIO . SOLA . DEFUIT
CUM . OMNIBUS . AD . XXX . CAPITUM . MILLIA
QUI . COLUERANT . LITERAS
VEL . PATRUM . CONSULTA . SERVARANT
VEL . SANGUINEM . SUUM . PRO . FERNANDO

DEVOVERANT . PRIMI . FUDERANTQUE
VINCTUS . EST . CLUSUS . IN . CARCERE . AMICIS . LIBRIS
VITAE . DENIQUE . OMNI . COMMODO
OMNI . CONSOLATIONE . PRIVATUS
ET . NECE . VIOLENTA . ATQUE
ID . SI . BONIS . ACCIDERE . QUEAT . INFAMI
JUSSU . FERNANDI . SUI . TRUCIDATUS.

REPUTATE . VOBISCUM . REGES . VICTORES
PUBLICI . UT . VULTIS . APPELLARI . JURIS . VINDICES
INDIGNA . PERPETI . VOS . HAUD . SOLOS . POSSE
PECCARE . HAUD . SOLAM . LIBERTATEM.

CALVUS . ROSAS

QUUM . TORMENTO . ALLIGATUS . ESSET . QUUMQUE ARTIUM . NEXUS . DIRUMPERENTUR . NEC . TAMEN . DESPONDERET . ANIMUM . NEC . VOCEM . EMITTERET . ROGATUS . A . CARNIFICE . ET . A . SACRIFICULO . NUMQUID FATERETUR . POSSE . ENIM . SI . VELLET . LOQUI . . . . HOC POSSUM . INQUIT . . . . CALVUS . ROSAS . EADEM . CONSTANTIA . MEMBRIS . OMNIBUS . FRACTIS . MORITURUS . EST QUA . CAESARAEAM . AUGUSTAM . DEFENDIT . ET . AD ULTIMUM . USQUE . VITAE . SPIRITUM . TYRANNORUM LIBIDINI . OBSISTET . DERIDEBIT . IMPOTENTIAM

PROGREDERE . SI . CIVIS . ES . ET . ESSE . TANTI . GAUDE. SI . PEREGRINUS . ES . PARCE . SAXO.

ZORRAQUIN . DUX . HEIC . JACET
APUD . VICUM . UT . DICITUR . URBS . MUNITA . TARRACONENSEM
A . GALLIS . VULNERATUS . AD . ATHANAGIAM . ASPORTATUS
IN . SINUM . LACRYMAS . QUUM . ACCEPISSET
IMPERATORIS . MINÆ
QUAS . PRIMAS . POST . INFANTIAM
VIR . CONSTANS . FUDERAT
PATRIÆ . VITAM . DEDIT . EJUSDEMQUE . MEMORIAM.

Pro monumento super milites regis jussu interemptos.

VIATOR

OSSA . QUAE . CALCAS . REGIS . FERNANDI . JUSSU . FRACTA
TORMENTIS . ERANT . PRO . PARENTIBUS . ET . LIBERIS

PRO . ARIS . ET . FOCIS . PRO . LEGIBUS . ET . REGE . PUGNAVIMUS . EMERITI . LUBENTER . QUIESCEREMUS . LIBERTATE . PARTA . QUIESCIMUS . AMISSA . PERLUBENTER.

The slaughterer should be commemorated as well as the slaughtered. The following verses were written, when he, who is the subject of them, was reported to have been flying to Rome.

Vos Flavii manes concedite, vosque Neronis.
Nobilior vobis improbitate venit.
Fortes, salva fuit per quos sua vita, tyrannus
Exilio, vinclis, carnificique dedit.
En venit ille fugax, qui semper ab hoste minaci
Abdidit os pavidum, deseruitque suos.
Parce tui simili, (si scis ignoscere, parces)
Huic miseræ muscæ, frater acerbe Titi.
Ne premat invidia, O soboles extrema Neronum.
Abscondat profugo fida latrina caput!
Sin minus, ultorum toties qui videris uncum,
Tibri, sit huic limus mollis, et unda levis.

Pro statua Cosciusconis in Soleta Helvetiorum.

HOC . IN . OPPIDO . E . VITA . MIGRAVIT . IMPERATOR . ILLE
QUI . CONSTANTIA . ET . CAUSA . SUA . FRETUS
ET . DEI . OPT: MAX: JUSTITIA
NEC . DESPERAVIT . IN . PESSIMIS . TEMPORIBUS
NEC . SUOS . DESPERARE . PASSUS . EST
THADDEUS . COSCIUSCO
PRO . SARMATIAE . ET . AMERICAE . LIBERTATE
VULNERIBUS . MULTIS . ET . GRAVIBUS . QUUM . LABORARET
IN . HELVETIAM . SECESSIT
ET . AEGRIMONIA . OB . AMISSAM . PATRIAM . ATQUE . OB
INCOMMODA . REIPUBLICAE . CONFECTUS . EST.
HEIC . O . HOSPES . UBI . NEMO . TE . REPREHENDET
STRENUUM . LIBERTATIS . VINDICEM . VENERATOR
SI . DANUBIUM . VERSUS . AUT . PADUM . PROFICISCERIS
REFERRE . SALTEM . FAS . ERIT . CIVIBUS . TUIS
PROBUM . LIBERALEM . PERURBANUM . EUM . FUISSE
ET . SAPIENTEM . ET . ERUDITUM.

It would be unjust to praise the stranger and neglect our countryman. Although no persecution hastened the death of the illustrious commander who is celebrated in the following lines, a just sense of his merits induces me to insert them.

Mortuus est Chatamus, quondam tellure Batavâ
  Nobilis...armato capta culina fuit.
Per totum ille diem solitus producere somnos,
  Excitus est centum quum cecinere tubæ.
Clamat, et invictas dum tendit in æthera palmas,
  Jupiter! ut soles hac regione nitent.
Nondum finierant, oculos quum clausit ovanti
  Hac qua nunc premitur vix minus alta quies.
Vos frontem anguillae, frontem vos cingite betae!
  Illi non faciet laurea sicca patris.

The expression in the last verse, which appears modern, is imitated from Propertius:

Non faciet capiti dura corona meo.

CONVERSATION VI.

PERICLES

AND

SOPHOCLES.

PERICLES

AND

SOPHOCLES.

PERICLES.

O SOPHOCLES! is there in the world a city so beautiful as Athens? Congratulate me, embrace me; the Piræus and the Pœcile are completed this day *; my glory is accomplished; behold it founded on the supremacy of our fellow-citizens.

* Their decorations only; for the structures were finished before. The propylæa of Pericles were entrances to the citadel: other works of consummate beauty were erected as decorations to the city, but chiefly in the Pœcile, where also was seen the temple of Cybele, and her statue by Phidias. All the public works of London, and of Paris, would not form a third of the Piræus, the length of which exceeded six miles, the highth was sixty feet, not reckoning the foundation, and the breadth at top about twelve: it was of square stones, fastened together by cramps of iron and insertions of lead: it was continued by two walls, one of four miles, the other somewhat less, each adorned with statues and propylæa.

The Romans did less in their city than in their colonies.

SOPHOCLES.

And it arises, O Pericles, the more majestically from the rich and delightful plain of equal laws.

The greatest of their works was their wall against the Caledonians, the most majestic and solid was their bridge across the Danube. In theatres they excelled the Athenians; those at Athens were worthy of Pollio and Seneca, those at Rome of Æschylus and Sophocles. The Romans at all periods have built out of ruins. A band of robbers and outcasts found on the banks of the Tiber a city so little dilapidated, that it served them to inhabit: a place which some pestilence had devastated, or which the inhabitants had abandoned for its insalubrity. They roofed the houses with sedge and rushes, contracted the vast circumference of the walls, and amidst these occupations grew somewhat more orderly and civilized. As however from their habits of life they had brought few women with them, these they took by fraud and violence from their unwarlike neighbours. The Italians, who, whatever the Roman historians, to increase the glory of the conqueror, may represent them, were always the least martial and the least enterprising of the Europeans, could not recover their wives and daughters, and soon made peace with their violators. No splendid house, no ample temple, was erected for five hundred years: so barbarous was the genius of the people. The magnificence of Corinth and of Syracuse, the two most elegant and splendid cities that ever rose from the earth, had left no impression on their conquerors: their cups were of gold, while their temples and the Gods within them were of stone and clay. Lucullus was the first amongst them who had any idea of magnificence in architecture. Julius Cæsar, to whom Glory in all her forms was more familiar than his own Penates, fell a victim to his ambition, and left nothing memorable in Rome but Pompey's statue. Augustus did somewhat in adorning the city; but Augustus was no Pericles. Tiberius, melancholy at the loss of a wife torn away from him by policy, sank

The Gods have bestowed on our statuaries and painters a mighty power, enabling them to restore

into that dreadful malady which invaded all branches of the Claudian family, and, instead of embellishing Rome, darkened it with disquietudes and suspicions, and retired into a solitude which his enemies have peopled with monsters, such as, reason and reflection must convince us, were incompatible with the tenderness of his grief; and his mental powers were not always estranged. Nero, a most virtuous and beneficent prince, was soon affected by the same insanity, acting differently on his heart and intellect; he never lost sight of magnificence; he erected a palace before which all the splendours of Pericles fade away. Plutarch tells us, in the life of Publicola, that he had seen at Athens the columns of Pentelican marble for the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; that their thickness was reduced at Rome, to the great injury of their proportions; and that the gilding of the whole edifice cost twelve thousand talents, above two millions sterling. There were rooms in the palace of Nero as large, the ground on which it stood was thirty times the extent, the gilding as rich or richer. The masters of the world trembled to enter it and commanded its destruction, removed the works of Phidias and of Praxiteles, of Scopas and of Lysippus, of Apelles and of Zeuxis, of which probably all that were extant were assembled here, poured forth the lava of gold, from its cielings, its arches, and its architraves, and constructed out of its kitchens and stables a bath and amphitheatre for the Roman people. The conflagration of Rome, if the mention of it may be admitted here, I believe to have arisen from the same cause as the conflagration of London, the necessity of purifying the city after an endemical disease, and of leaving no narrow streets in the centre for its recurrence. The extreme love which the populace bore towards Nero during his whole life and long afterwards is a proof that they did not attribute it to his cruelty and caprice, and that the losses of all were abundantly recompensed by his wealth and liberality. Nothing was left for Hadrian but to copy the

our ancestors unto us, some in the calm of thought, others in the tumult of battle, and to present them before our children when we are gone.

finer works of the Athenians, which he brought together under his eye. Architecture then sank for ages.

The Moors introduced a kind of civility far preferable to any in existence among the later Romans, and a style of architecture more fanciful and ornamental, which also had this advantage, that it brought with it no recollections or ideas of deterioration and decline. The cathedrals in Spain are the most exquisite models of it; and illuminated books, which the Arabs, Turks, and Persians, still prize highly, gave, I imagine, those ideas on which the English raised so many noble edifices in their own country and in France, correcting by them the heavier and more confused masses of Italy; a style which still prevails.

Parcius ista Italis tamen objicienda.

In London with St. Paul's and St. Stephen's before us, in Bath with Queen's-square, the Crescent, and the Circus (to which last nothing in Rome or in the world is equal), we build cottages like castles, and palaces like cottages; and where the edifice is plain and simple, the window is a hole knocked in the wall, looking like an eye without eyebrow or lashes, or else is situated in the midst of an arch, as if a ruin had been patched up to receive it.

Let us reflect one moment more on Athens. A city not much larger than Liverpool or Bristol, and all whose inhabitants might have been lost in Syracuse, produced within the short period of two centuries, reckoning from the battle of Marathon, a greater number of exquisite models in war, philosophy, patriotism, eloquence, and poetry; in the semi-mechanical arts which always accompany or follow them, sculpture and painting; and in the first of the mechanical, architecture, than all the remainder of the universe in six thousand years. She

PERICLES.

Shall it be so? Alas, how worthless an incumbrance, how wearisome an impediment is life, if it separate us from the better of our ancestors, not in our existences only, but in our merits! We are little by being seen among men; because that phasis of us only is visible which is exposed towards them and which most resembles them; we become greater by leaving the world, as the sun appears to be on descending below the horizon. Strange reflection! humiliating truth! that nothing on earth, no exertion, no endowment, can do so much for us as a distant day. And deep indeed, O Sophocles, must be the impression made upon thy mind by these masterly works of art, if they annihilate in a manner all the living; if they lower in thee that spirit, which hath often aroused by one touch, or rather flash, the whole Athenian people at thy tragedies, and force upon thee the cold and ungenial belief, the last which it appears to be their

rises up again and is pushed back by common consent. The rulers of nations seem to think they have as much interest in abolishing all traces of her, if they can, as Alexander had to demolish (which he did) the monuments of the Argonautic expedition. Darius thought differently: had he less or more to fear? He established and cemented, by means of Mardonius, a republican form of government in all the Grecian cities of Ionia...There is policy in content both in keeping and in causing it.

nature to inculcate, that while our children are in existence it can cease to be amongst them.

SOPHOCLES.

I am only the interpreter of the heroes and divinities who are looking down on me. When I survey them I remember their actions, and when I depart from them I visit the regions they illustrated.

Neither the Goddesses on Ida nor the Gods before Troy were such rivals as our artists. Æschylus hath surpassed me*: I must excell Æschylus. O Pericles, thou conjurest up Discontent from the bosom of Delight, and givest her an elevation of mien and character she never knew before: thou makest every man greater than his neighbour, and not in his own eyes but in another's. We still want historians: thy eloquence will form the style, thy administration will supply the materials. Beware, O my friend, lest the people hereafter be too proud of their city, and imagine that to have been born in Athens is enough.

* Sophocles gained the first prize for which he contended with Æschylus, and was conscious that he had not yet deserved the superiority, which enthusiasm on the one side and jealousy on the other are always ready to grant a vigorous young competitor. The character of Sophocles was frank and liberal on all occasions, and was remarkably proved so on the death of his last rival Euripides.

PERICLES.

And this indeed were hardly more irrational, than the pride which cities take sometimes in the accident of a man's birth within their walls, of a citizen's whose experience was acquired, whose virtues were fostered, and perhaps whose services were performed, elsewhere.

SOPHOCLES.

They are proud of having been the cradles of great men, then only, when great men can be no longer an incumbrance or a reproach to them. Let them rather boast of those who spend the last day in them than the first: this is always accidental, that is generally by choice; for, from something like instinct, we wish to close our eyes upon the world in the places we love best, the child in its mother's bosom, the patriot in his country. When we are born we are the same as all others: at our decease we may induce our friends, and oblige our enemies to acknowledge that all others are not the same as we. It is folly to say, Death levels the whole human race: for it is only when he hath stripped men of every thing external, that their deformities can be clearly discovered or their worth correctly ascertained. Gratitude is soon silent; a little while longer and Ingratitude is tired, is satisfied, is exhausted, or

sleeps; lastly fly off the fumes of partyspirit, the hottest and most putrid ebullition of selflove. We then see before us, and contemplate calmly, the creator of our customs, the ruler of our passions, the arbiter of our pleasures, and under the Gods, the disposer of our destiny. What then, I pray thee, is there dead? nothing more than that which we can handle, cast down, bury; and surely not he who is yet to progenerate a more numerous and far better race, than during the few years it was permitted us to converse with him.

PERICLES.

When I reflect on Themistocles, on Aristides, and on the greatest of mortal men, Miltiades, I wonder how their countrymen can repeat their names, unless in performing the office of expiation *.

* There are some who may deem this reflection unsuitable to the character of Pericles. I wish it were so: I would gladly have suppressed it. He saw injustice in others, and hated it; yet he caused the banishment of Cimon, as great a man as any of the three: it is true he had afterwards the glory of proposing, and of carrying to Sparta, the decree of his recall. Let us contemplate the brighter side of his character, such as it appeared at the time when I describe it, his eloquence, his wit, his clemency, his judgement and firmness in friendship, his regularity, his decorousness, his domesticity; let us then unite him with his predecessor, and acknowledge that such illustrious rivals never met before or since, in enmity or in friendship.

SOPHOCLES.

Cities are ignorant that nothing is more disgraceful to them, than to be the birthplaces of the illustriously good, and not afterwards the places of their residence; that their dignity consists in adorning them with distinctions, in entrusting to them the regulation of the commonwealth, and not in having sold a crust or cordial to the nurse or midwife.

PERICLES.

O Jove and Minerva! grant a right mind to the Athenians! If throughout so many and such eventful ages they have been found by you deserving of their freedom, render them more and more worthy of the great blessing you bestowed on them! May the valour of our children defend this mole for ever; and constantly may their patriotism increase and strengthen among these glorious reminiscences! Shield them from the jealousy of neighbouring states, from the ferocity of barbarian kings, and from the perfidy of those who profess the same religion! Teach them that

Could the piety attributed to Pericles have belonged to a scholar of Anaxagoras? Eloquent men often talk like religious men: and where could the eloquence of Pericles be more enflamed by enthusiasm, than in the midst of his propylæa, at the side of Sophocles and before the Gods of Phidias?

between the despot and the free all compact is a cable of sand, and alliance most unholy! and, O givers of power and wisdom! remove from them the worst and wildest of illusions, that happiness, liberty, virtue, genius, will be fostered or long respected, much less attain their just ascendency, under any other form of government!

SOPHOCLES.

May the Gods hear thee, Pericles, as they have always done! or may I, reposing in my tomb, never know that they have not heard thee!

I smile on imagining how trivial would thy patriotism and ideas of government appear to Chlorus. And indeed much wiser men, from the prejudices of habit and education, have undervalued them, preferring the dead quiet of their wintry hives to our breezy spring of life and busy summer. The countries of the vine and olive are more subject to hailstorms than the regions of the north: yet is it not better that some of the fruit should fall than that none should ripen?

PERICLES.

Quit these creatures; let them lie warm and slumber; they are all they ought to be, all they can be: but prythee who is Chlorus, that he should deserve to be named by Sophocles?

SOPHOCLES.

He was born somewhere on the opposite coast of Eubœa, and sold as a slave in Persia to a man who dealt largely in that traffic, and who also had made a fortune by displaying to the public four remarkable proofs of ability: first, by swallowing at a draught an amphora of the strongest wine; secondly, by standing up erect and modulating his voice like a sober man when he was drunk; thirdly, by acting to perfection like a drunken man when he was sober; and fourthly, by a most surprising trick indeed, which, it is reported, he learnt in Babylonia: one would have sworn he had a blazing fire in his mouth; take it out, and it is nothing but a lump of ice. The king, before whom he was admitted to play his tricks, hated him at first, and told him that the last conjuror had made him cautious of such people, he having been detected in filching from a royal tiara one of the weightiest jewels...but talents forced their way. As for Chlorus, I mention him by the name under which I knew him; he has changed it since: for although the dirt wherewith it was encrusted kept him comfortable at first, when it cracked and began to crumble it was incommodious.

The barbarians have commenced, I understand,

to furbish their professions and vocations with rather whimsical skirts and linings: thus for instance a chessplayer is *lion-hearted* and *worshipful;* a drunkard is *serenity* and *highness;* a hunter of fox, badger, polecat, fitchew and weazel, is *excellency* and *right honourable;* while, such is the delicacy of distinction, a rat-catcher is considerably less: he however is *illustrious*, and appears, as a tail to a comet, in the train of a legation, holding a pen between his teeth, to denote his capacity for secretary, and leading a terrier in the right hand, and carrying a trap baited with cheese and anise-seed in the left.

It is as creditable among them to lie with dexterity as it is common among the Spartans to steal. Chlorus, who performed it with singular frankness and composure, had recently a cock's feather mounted on his turban, in place of a hen's, and the people was commanded to address him by the title of *most noble*. His brother Alexaretes was employed at a stipend of four talents to detect an adultress in one among the royal wives: he gave no intelligence in the course of several months: at last the king, seeing him on his return, cried angrily, "*What hast thou been doing? hast thou never found her out?*" He answered, "*Thy ser-*

vant, O king, hath been doing more than finding out an adultress: he hath, O king, been making one."

PERICLES.

I have heard the story, with this difference, that the bed-embassador being as scantily gifted with spirit and facetiousness as with perspicacity and attention, the reply was framed satirically by some other courtier, who, imitating his impudence, had forgotten his incapacity. But about the reward of falsehood, that is wonderful, when we read that formerly the Persians were occupied many years in the sole study of truth.

SOPHOCLES.

How difficult then must they have found it! no wonder they left it off the first moment they could conveniently. The granfather of Chlorus was honest: he carried a pack upon his shoulders, in which pack were contained the coarser linens of Caria: these he retailed among the villages of Asia and Greece, but principally in the islands. He died: on the rumour of war, the son and granson, then an infant, fled: the rest is told. In Persia no man inquires how another comes to wealth or power, the suddenness of which appears to be effected by some of the demons or genii of their songs and stories.

PERICLES.

The ideas of such a man on government must be curious: I am persuaded he would far preferr the Persian to any... I forgot to mention that, according to what I hear this morning, the great king has forbidden all ships to sail within thirty parasangs of his coasts, and has also claimed the dominion of half ours.

SOPHOCLES.

Where is the scourge with which Xerxes lashed the ocean? were it not better laid on the shoulders of a madman than placed within his hand?

PERICLES.

Immoderate power, like other intemperance, leaves the progeny weaker and weaker, until Nature, as in compassion, covers it with her mantle and it is seen no more, or until the arm of indignant man sweeps it from before him.

We must, ere long, excite the other barbarians to invade the territories of this, and before the cement of his new acquisitions shall have hardened. Large conquests break readily off from an empire, by their weight, while smaller stick fast. A wide and rather waste kingdom should be interposed between the policied states and Persia... by the leave of Chlorus. Perhaps he would rather, in his benevolence, unite us with the great and happy

family of his master: perhaps you or I, my Sophocles, may be invited to repose our legs a little in the same stocks with Dorkas, or even to eat at the same table. Despots are wholesale dealers in equality; and, father Jupiter, was ever equality like this?

SOPHOCLES.

After all, my dear Pericles...do excuse my smile...is not that the best government, which, whatever be the form of it, we ourselves are called upon to administer?

PERICLES.

The Piræus and the Pœcile have a voice of their own, wherewith to answer thee, O Sophocles! and the Athenians, exempt from war, famine, taxes, debts, exiles, fines, imprisonment, delivered from monarchy, from oligarchy, and from anarchy, walking along their porticos, inhaling their sea-breezes, crowning their Gods daily for fresh blessings, and their children for deserving them, reply to this voice by the symphony of their applause ...Hark! my words are not idle. Hither come the youths and virgins, the sires and matrons; hither come citizen and soldier...

SOPHOCLES.

A solecism from Pericles! Has the most elo-

quent of men forgotten the Attic language? has he forgotten the language of all Greece? can the father of his country be ignorant that he should have said hither *comes?* for citizen and soldier is one.

PERICLES.

The fault is graver than the reproof, or indeed than simple incorrectness of language: my eyes misled my tongue: a large portion of the citizens is armed.

O what an odour of thyme and bay and myrtle, and from what a distance, bruized by the procession!

SOPHOCLES.

What regular and full harmony! What a splendour and effulgence of white dresses! painful to aged eyes and dangerous to young.

PERICLES.

I can distinguish many voices from among others: some of them have blessed me for defending their innocence before the judges; some for exhorting Greece to unanimity; some for my choice of friends. Ah surely those sing sweetest! those are the voices, O Sophocles! that shake my heart with tenderness, a tenderness passing love, and excite it above the trumpet and the cymbal.

Return we to the Gods: the crowd is waving the branches of olive, calling us by name, and closing to salute us.

SOPHOCLES.

O citadel of Minerva, more than all other citadels, may the Goddess of wisdom and of war protect thee! and never may strange tongue be heard within thy walls, unless from captive king!

Live, Pericles! and inspire into thy people the soul that once animated these heroes round us.

Hail, men of Athens! pass onward; leave me; I follow. Go; behold the Gods, the Demigods, and Pericles!

The colours of thy waves are not the same
Day after day, O Neptune! nor the same
The fortunes of the land wherefrom arose
Under thy trident the brave friend of man.
Wails have been heard from women, sterner breasts
Have sounded with the desperate pang of grief,
Gray hairs have strewn these rocks: here Egeus cried,

"O Sun! careering o'er the downs of Sipylus,
If desolation (worse than ever there
Befell the mother, and those heads her own
Would shelter, when the deadly darts flew round)
Impend not o'er my house, in gloom so long,
Let one swift cloud illumined by thy chariot
Sweep off the darkness from that doubtful sail!"

Deeper and deeper came the darkness down;
The sail itself was heard; his eyes grew dim:
His knees tottered beneath him ... but availed
To bear him till he plunged into the deep.

Sound, fifes! there is a youthfulness of sound
In your shrill voices ... sound again, ye lips
That Mars delights in ... I will look no more
Into the times behind for idle goads
To stimulate faint fancies ... hope itself
Is bounded by the starry zone of glory;
On one bright point we gaze, one wish we breathe:

Athens! be ever, as thou art this hour,
Happy and strong, a Pericles thy guide.

The Persian despots contented themselves with debasing the souls of the nations whom they had enslaved; but do not appear to have been very covetous of their purses. Herodotus calls their taxation of the Ionian states a tranquillizing and pacificatory measure. In this respect the world has grown wiser as it has grown older. Appian states that Pompey imposed on the Syrians and Cilicians a *hundredth* of their income. Hadrian was accused of great severity towards the Jews, for having somewhat augmented the rate which Vespasian had fixed, and which, according to Zonaras and Xiphilinus, was two drachmas on each (about eighteen pence). Strabo remarks that Egypt brought a revenue of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds to the father of Cleopatra, which sum Augustus doubled. Paterculus says, that Gaul paid more than Egypt. According to Suetonius and Eutropius, Cesar imposed on Gaul a tax of twentyfour thousand pounds, which

Lipsius thinks an error, and quadruples the amount. He estimates the revenue drawn by Rome from Asia, Spain, Greece, Illyria, and the other provinces, at six millions sterling. He inclines to exaggeration. Plutarch, in the life of Pompey, informs us that he levied from Asia one hundred and ninetytwo thousand pounds. Marcus Antonius exacted from the same country, at one time, the tribute of ten years, about three million six hundred thousand pounds, reproaching the nations that they had paid as much to Brutus and Cassius in two. When Augustus was declared commander in chief against him, the senate, according to Xiphilinus, ordered that all citizens and others should pay a *property-tax of a twentieth,* and that all senators should besides pay four oboli (sixpence) for each chimney. Dion Cassius goes farther; and adds that they also paid two oboli for every *tile* of their houses both in town and country. Antonius and Augustus were the first that imposed a tax on slaves: it amounted to less than ten shillings for each. When they imposed one upon wills, it caused an insurrection... We are better subjects than they were, although they enjoyed under an *holy alliance* the benefits of regular government, and had been accustomed to the salutary discipline of proscription.

CONVERSATION VII.

LOUIS XIV

AND

FATHER LA CHAISE.

LOUIS XIV

AND

FATHER LA CHAISE.

LOUIS.

Father, there is one thing which I never have confessed; sometimes considering it almost as a light matter, and sometimes seeing it in its true colours. In my wars against the Dutch I committed an action...

LA CHAISE.

Sire, the ears of the Lord are always open to those who confess their sins to their confessor. Cruelties and many other bad deeds are perpetrated in war, at which we should shudder in our houses at Paris.

LOUIS.

The people who were then in their houses did shudder, poor devils! It was ludicrous to see how such clumsy figures skipped, when the bombs fell

amongst their villages, in which the lower part of the habitations was under water, and children looked from the upper windows, between the legs of calves and lambs, and of the old household dog, struggling to free himself, as less ignorant of his danger. Loud shrieks were sometimes heard, when the artillery and other implements of war were silent; for fevers raged within their insulated walls, and wives execrated their husbands, with whom they had lived in concord and tenderness many years, when the father enforced the necessity of throwing their dead infant into the lake below. Our young soldiers on such occasions exercised their dexterity, and took their choice; for the whole family was assembled at the casement, and prayers were read over the defunct, accompanied with some firm and with some faultering responses.

By these terrible examples God punished their heresy.

LA CHAISE.

The Lord of Hosts is merciful: he protected your Majesty in the midst of these terrors.

LOUIS.

He sustained my strength, kept up my spirits, and afforded me every day some fresh amusement, in the midst of this rebellious and blasphemous people, who regularly, a quarter before twelve

o'clock, knowing that mass was then performed amongst us, sang their psalms.

LA CHAISE.

I cannot blame a certain degree of severity on such occasions: on much slighter, we read in the Old Testament, nations were smitten with the edge of the sword.

LOUIS.

I have wanted to find that place, but my Testament was not an old one; it was printed at the Louvre in my own time. As for the edge of the sword, it was not always convenient to use that; they are stout fellows: but our numbers enabled us to starve them out, and we had more engineers, and better. Besides which, I took peculiar vengeance on some of the principal families, and on some amongst the most learned of their professors: for if any had a dissolute son, who, as dissolute sons usually are, was the darling of the house, I bribed him, made him drunk, and converted him. This occasionally broke the father's heart: God's punishment of stubbornness!

LA CHAISE.

Without the especial grace of the Holy Spirit, such conversions are transitory. It is requisite to secure the soul while we have it, by the exertion of a little loving-kindness. I would deliver the

poor stray creatures up to their Maker straitway, lest he should call me to account for their backsliding. Heresy is a leprosy, which the whiter it is the worse it is. Those who appear the most innocent and godly, are the very men who do the most mischief, and hold the fewest observances. They hardly treat God Almighty like a gentleman, grudge him a clean napkin at his own table, and spend less upon him than upon a christmas dinner.

LOUIS.

O father La Chaise! you have searched my heart; you have brought to light my hidden offences. Nothing is concealed from your penetration. I come forth like a criminal in his chains.

LA CHAISE.

Confess, sire, confess! I will pour the oil into your wounded spirit, taking due care that the vengeance of heaven be satisfied by your atonement.

LOUIS.

Intelligence was brought to me that the cook of the English general had prepared a superb dinner, in consequence of what that insolent and vainglorious people are in the habit of calling a success. *We shall soon see*, exclaimed I, *who is successful: God protects France.* The whole army shouted, and, I verily believe, at that moment would

have conquered the world. I deferred it: my designs lie in my own breast. Father, I never heard such a shout in my life: it reminded me of Cherubim and Seraphim and Arcangels. The infantry cried with joy, the horses capered and neighed, and broke wind right and left, from an excess of animation. Leopard-skins, bear-skins, Genoa velvet, Mechlin ruffles, Brussels cravats, feathers and fringes and golden bands, up in the air at once; pawings and snortings, threats and adjurations, beginnings and ends of songs. I was Henry and Cesar, and Alexander and David, and Charlemagne and Agamemnon...I had only to give the word; they would swim across the Channel, and bring the tyrant of proud Albion back in chains. All my prudence was requisite to repress their ardour.

A letter had been intercepted by my scouts, addressed by the wife of the English general to her husband. She was at Gorcum; she informed him that she would send him a glorious *mincepie*, for his dinner the following day, in celebration of his victory. "Devil incarnate," said I on reading the despatch, "I will disappoint thy malice." I was so enraged, that I went within a mile or two of cannon-shot; and I should have gone within

half a mile if my dignity had permitted me, or if my resentment had lasted. I liberated the messenger, detaining as hostage his son, who accompanied him, and promising that if the *mincepie* was secured, I would make him a chevalier on the spot. Providence favoured our arms. But unfortunately there were among my staff-officers some who had fought under Turenne, and who, I suspect, retained the infection of heresy. They presented the *mincepie* to me on their knees, and I ate. It was Friday. I did not remember the day, when I began to eat; but the sharpness of the weather, the odour of the pie, and something of vengeance springing up again at the sight of it, made me continue after I had recollected: and for my greater condemnation, I had enquired that very morning of what materials it was composed. God set his face against me, and hid from me the light of his countenance. I lost victory after victory, nobody knows how; for my generals were better than the enemy's, my soldiers more numerous, more brave, more disciplined. And, extraordinary and awful! even those who swore to conquer or die, ran back again like whelps just gelt, crying, *It is the first duty of a soldier to see his king in safety.* I never heard so many fine,

sentiments, or fewer songs. My stomach was out of order by the visitation of the Lord. I took the sacrament on the Sunday.

LA CHAISE.

The sacrament on a Friday's *gras!* I should have recommended an enema first, with a *de profundis*, a *miserere*, and an *eructavit cor meum*, and lastly a little oil of ricina, which administered by the holy and taken by the faithful is almost as efficacious in its way as that of Rheims. Penance is to be done: your Majesty must fast: your Majesty must wear sackcloth next your skin, and carry ashes upon your head before the people.

LOUIS.

Father, I cannot consent to this humiliation: the people must fear me. What are you doing with those scissars and that pill? I am sound in body; give it Villeroy or Richelieu.

LA CHAISE.

Sire, no impiety, no levity, I pray. In this pill, as your Majesty calls it, are some flakes of ashes from the incense, which seldom is pure gum: break it between your fingers, and scatter it upon your peruke: well done: now take this.

LOUIS.

Faith! I have no sore on groin or limb. A black plaister! what is that for?

LA CHAISE.

This is sackcloth. It was the sack in which Madame de Maintenon put her knitting, until the pins frayed it.

LOUIS.

I should have believed that sackcloth means...

LA CHAISE.

No interpretations of scripture, I charge you from authority, Sire. Put it on your back or bosom.

LOUIS.

God forgive me, sinner! It has dropped down into my breeches: will that do?

LA CHAISE.

Did it, in descending, touch your back, belly, ribs, breast, or shoulder, or any part that needs mortification, and can be mortified without scandal?

LOUIS.

I placed it between my frills.

LA CHAISE.

In such manner as to touch the skin sensibly?

LOUIS.

It tickled me, by stirring a hair or two.

LA CHAISE.

Be comforted then; for people have been tickled to death.

LOUIS.

But, father, you remitt the standing in presence of the people?

LA CHAISE.

Indeed I do not. Stand at the window, son of St. Louis!

LOUIS.

And perform the same ceremonies? no, upon my conscience! My almoner.

LA CHAISE.

They are performed.

LOUIS.

But the people will never know what is on my head or in my breeches.

LA CHAISE.

The penance is performed so far: tomorrow is Friday: one more rigid must be enforced. Six dishes alone shall come upon the table; and, although fasting does not extend to wines or liqueurs, I order that three kinds only of wine be presented, and three of liqueur.

LOUIS.

In the six dishes is soup included?

LA CHAISE.

Soup is not served in a dish; but I forbid more than three kinds of soup.

LOUIS.

Oysters of Concale...

LA CHAISE.

Those come in barrels: take care they be not dished. Your Majesty must either eat them raw

from the barrel, or dressed in scallop, or both; but beware, I say again, of dish in this article, as your soul shall answer for it at the last day. There are those who would prohibit them wholly. I have experienced... I mean in others... strange uncouth effects therefrom, which, unless they shadow forth something mystical, it were better not to provoke.

LOUIS.

Pray, father, why is that frightful day which you have mentioned just now, and which I think I have heard mentioned before, called the last? when the last in this life is over before it comes, and when the first in the next is not begun.

LA CHAISE.

It is called the last day by the Church, because after that day the Church can do nothing for the sinner. Her saints, martyrs, and confessors, can plead at the bar for him the whole of that day until sunset, some say until after *angelus;* then the books are closed, the candles put out, the doors shut, and the key turned: the flames of Purgatory then sink into the floor, and would not wither a cistus-leaf, full-blown and shed: there is nothing left but heaven and hell, songs and lamentations.

LOUIS.

Permitt me to ask another question of no less importance, and connected with my penance. The

bishop of Aix in Provence has sent me thirty fine quails...

LA CHAISE.

There are naturalists who assert that quails have fallen from heaven, like manna. Externally they bear the appearance of birds, and I have eaten them in that persuasion. If however any one, from grave authority, is convinced of the contrary, or propends to believe so, and eats thereof, the fault is venial. I conferred with Tamburini on this momentous point. He distinguishes between quails taken in the field, or quails taken in the air as they descend or pass, and tame quails, bred within coops and enclosures, which are begotten in the ordinary way of generation, and whose substance in that case must be different. I cannot believe that the bishop of Aix would be the conservator of creatures so given to fighting and wantonness; but rather would opine that his quails descended somewhere in his diocese, and perhaps as a mark of divine favour to so worthy a member of the Church. It is safer to eat them after twelve o'clock at night; but where there is purity and humility of spirit, I see not that they are greatly to be dreaded.

The fiction of the quails, at the conclusion of this dialogue, will appear extravagant to those only who are in ignorance that such opinions have prevailed, not among casuists alone but among philosophers. A case more immediately in point is this. The Carthusians, to whom animal food is forbidden, whereby they mean solely the flesh of quadrupeds and of birds, may nevertheless eat the *gull*: it may be eaten by all catholics, even in Lent. I know not whether from this permission, and the acceptance of it, we derive our English verb and noun: I think it probable.

We often lay most stress on our slightest faults, and have more apprehension from things unessential than from things essential...When Lord Tylney was on his deathbed, and had not been shaved for two days, he burst suddenly into tears, and cried to his valet, "Are not you ashamed to abandon me? would you let me go *this figure* into the presence of my Maker?"

He was shaved, and (I hope) presented.

* * * *

Louis XIV is the great exemplar of kingship, the object of almost religious worship to countless declamers against the ferocity of *the people*. The invasion of Holland, the conflagration of the Palatinate, the revocation of the edict of Nantes, have severally been celebrated, by French poets, French historians, French jurists, and French bishops. The most unprovoked act of cruelty on record was perpetrated by another king of France. I transcribe the words of an historian, the defender and panegyrist of them all, Bussieres. Victi Bulgari, et ex sociis in servitutem rapti, mox eorum plures relictâ patriâ exulatum ultro abierunt. Ex iis ad *novem millia, uxoribus liberisque impliciti*, a Dagoberto sedes petunt... Jussi per hyemem hærere in Bavariâ dum amplius rex deliberaret, in plures urbes domosque sparsi sunt; tum novo barbaroque facinore unâ nocte cæsi omnes simul. *Quippe Dagobertus immani consilio Boiarios jubet, singulos suis hospitibus necem inferre, ratione nullâ ætatis aut sexûs;* et quâ truculentiâ imperatum, obtemperatum eâdem. Condictâ nocte miseri ho-

mines in asylo somni obtruncantur, imbelles feminæ, insontes pueri; totque funera hilaritati fuerunt, non luctui... This forms a peculiar feature in the national character, indestructible amidst all forms of government. It is amusing to read our jesuit's words in the sequel. Ad beneficiorum fontem se convertit, multaque dona elargitus templis, *emendabat scelera liberalitate*... to priests and monks... Nec Dagoberto *liberalitas* pia frustra fuit: siquidem sancti quos in vivis multum coluerat, Dionysius, Mauritius, et Martinus, oblati sunt Joanni monacho *vigilanti*, regis animam eripientes e potestate dæmonum sævisque tormentis, eamque secum in cœli regiam deducentes.

CONVERSATION VIII.

CAVALIERE PUNTOMICHINO

AND

MR. DENIS EUSEBIUS TALCRANAGH.

CAVALIERE PUNTOMICHINO

AND

MR. DENIS EUSEBIUS TALCRANAGH.

THE Cavaliere Puntomichino was the last male representative of an ancient family. He was an honest and rich man: so that, when his intention was understood at Florence of traveling to England, it excited suspicion in some, and surprise in all; for Italians of that description were never known amongst them to have crossed the Channel. He went however, and remained there several years, reading our best authors, and wondering, as he informed me, at one thing only, which is, that there could really be in the whole human race so prodigious a diversity, as he found in almost every five individuals whom he conversed with in our metropolis.

"I have often observed," said he, "more variety

in a single household, than I believe to exist in all Italy."

He never had about him the slightest taint of affectation, yet became he singular, and glaringly so, at his first introduction to the academy of La Crusca: for he asserted three paradoxes: first, that no sentence in a comedy should exceed a fair page in octavo; secondly, that no witticism should be followed by an explanation, in the dialogue, of more than two pages; and thirdly, that Shakespear had nearly or quite as much humour as Goldoni. Henceforward he was a worthy man, but an oddity. His claim to the literary character I shall forbear to discuss; although I have many papers, not indeed of his own writing, but addressed to him by others, some of which go so far as to call him a nightingale, some a great doctor, some an eagle, some a phenix, some a sun, and one both a sun and a phenix. But this last was written by a rival of him who wrote the preceding, and therefor its accuracy may be suspected, and it was declared by the academy to be more ingenious than correct.

His sedentary life had been unfriendly to his health, and he was seized in the beginning of this winter with repeated and severe attacks in the breast. As he had inherited a good property,

and had collected many rare books, nearly all the canons and professors began to write *tributes, monodies, elegies, musæ plangentes, Etruriæ luctus*, and consolations to his heir, a very distant relative, whose brother, in the time of the French government, had been hanged for robbery at the age of eighteen, proving, as others have done in various ways, that misfortune is attendant on early elevation. He himself was in the galleys at Pisa for the murder of his father-in-law, who had educated him and had promised to leave him his estate. On the death of the cavaliere, it was foreseen that he, too late indeed for his happiness and sensibility, would be found innocent of an offence, for which the French laws in their precipitancy had condemned him. The proofs of this innocence were produced, the patron found, the sum stipulated, when the cavaliere, whose decease had been expected daily, died. On opening his will, it appeared that he had destined all his property to the maintenance of soldiers' widows and the redemption of slaves from Barbary. *Devils!* and *cazzo* and *cappari!* and *Bacco!* tripped up and exploded the muses and Etruria. The Pisan professor, their choregus, who, printer no less than professor and poet, had already struck off his *Lamentation*, spoke more calmly and reasonably than the rest, saying

manfully, *Gabriel, take down those sheets in papal quarto, and throw them upon the Codes of Napoleon...the thing wont do.* The expected and expecting heir was accused of falsifying the evidences, and fresh severities were added, for his attempts to corrupt justice.

Let me now revert to my first acquaintance with the cavaliere. I never in my life accepted a letter of introduction, nor ever expressed a wish, whatever I might have felt, for any man's society. By some accident this peculiarity was mentioned to Puntomichino, and he called on me immediately. Returning his visit, I found him in the library: several English books were upon the table, and there was seated at the window a young gentleman of easy manners and fashionable appearance, Mr. Denis Eusebius Talcranagh, of Castle-Talcranagh and of Skurrymore-Park, county Down, and first cousin, as he informed me, of Lord Cowslipmead, of Dove's-nest-Hall, county Meath, a great fire-eater. I bowed: on which he fancied that I had known his lordship intimately. On my confessing the contrary, he appeared at first rather mortified and surprised. *You must however have heard something, in your earlier days, of Sir Roderic James O'Rowran, my great uncle, who whenever he entered an inn with his friends,*

placed himself at the head of the table, and cried; "whiskey and pistols for eight!" It was now my turn to be mortified, and I could only reply that there were many men of merit whom it had never been my fortune to know. *Then, sir,* said he, *ten guineas to one you never were in Ireland in your life; for you must have known him if you had met him, whether you would or not.* There was an infinity of good-humour in Mr. Talcranagh; and if his ideas were not always luminous and perspicuous, they often came forth with a somewhat of prismatic brilliancy. He gave a decided preference to the writers of his own country over all others, *which,* he said, *we authors are not apt to do.* I then discovered that I had been conversing with a literary man, who had published an imperial folio of eleven pages on the Irish wolf-dog. *I sold all my copies,* said he, *and bought a tilbury and a leash of setters. And now, sir, if ever you should print any thing, take my advice; cuts in wood or cuts in stone, and a black-letter title-page for your life! I did it, without a knowledge of printer or publisher... to be sure, I was master of my subject, which goes a great way; and then indeed I had a pair of extraordinary capital buckskins, which, it is true, began to*

carry on the surface, as Southey says of Flemish scenery,

" a grey and willowy hue,"

but which I found a fellow in Cockspur-street who could clean neatly, and these I sent with my best compliments to the prime hand in the ——— Review, taking care to leave by accident a bran-new guinea in the watch-pocket. This was enough; I went no farther in expenditure, although —— was constantly at the heels of my groom Honorius, pressing him to write a critique on the Wolfdog of Erin for the ——— ——— since I from ignorance of custom was too proud to do it, and assuring him that, look as he might and shake his head as he would, he was no Jew and would do the thing reasonably. Sir, added he smartly, *are you a friend to dogs?*

" A thousand thanks to you, Mr. Talcranagh," cried I, " for asking me a question which I can answer in the affirmative. There is a sort of free-masonry amongst us, I verily believe; for no dog, except a cur, a pug, or a turnspit, ever barks at me: they and children love me universally: I have more than *divisum imperium:* these form the best part of the world."

Add the women, shouted he aloud, *and here is my hand for you*. We saluted cordially.

"Indeed," said I, "Mr. Talcranagh, you have reason to be proud of your countrywomen, for their liveliness, their beauty, and their genius. The book before us, which you were looking into, abounds in eloquence, philosophy, and patriotism; there is nothing of commonplace, nothing of sickly sentiment, nothing of insane enthusiasm. I read warily; and whenever I find the writings of a lady, the first thing I do, is to cast my eyes along her pages, to see whether I am likely to be annoyed by the traps and spring-guns of interjections, and if I happen to espy them, I do not leap the paling. In these volumes I see much to admire, and nothing that goads or worries me into admiration."

"Gentlemen," said the cavaliere, "I am as warm an admirer of Lady Morgan as either of you, and if she had consulted me on a few matters and persons, I could have rendered her some service by setting her right. Travelers are profuse of praise and censure, in proportion as they have been civilly or indecorously received, not inquiring nor caring whether the account be quite correct, if the personages of whom they write be of distinguished station; for censure no less than praise requires a

subject of notoriety. Lady Morgan has spoken of our patriots, the Russels of our city.

There may formerly have been a virtuous or a brave citizen in the family so extolled by her, and indeed in what family has there not been, earlier or later? but if those who now compose it are called Russels, with equal right may the cast horses of a sandcart be called Bucephali. Strangers are disposed to consider us as the vilest and most contemptible race in Europe, and they must appear to have reason on their side, if such creatures are taken for the best of us. Patriotism has here a very different meaning from what it has in England. A patriot, with us, is a man who is unfriendly to all established government, and who, while he flatters a native prince, courts over an invader. His only grievances are, to pay taxes for the support, and to carry arms for the defence, of his country. He would loosen all the laws, as impediments to the liberty of action, with a reserve of those which secure to him the fruits of rapine and confiscation: those are provident and conservative, and enthroned in light by the philanthropy of the age. Hospitality is the virtue of barbarians..."

"Blood and *hounds!*" cried indignantly my young friend, "I would ask him, whoever he is,

whether that was meant for me. If there is barbarism in a bottle of claret, there is as much of it in a corked as in an uncorked one."

"Sir," replied mildly Puntomichino, "I could shew you a Russel of the Italian school, who received unusual civilities in England, and of all those gentlemen there who treated him with attention and kindness, of all those with whom he dined constantly, not a single one, or any relative, was ever invited in his houses, even to a glass of stale barleywater or sugarless lemonade."

"Cavaliere," said I, "we more willingly give invitations than accept them: I speak of others, not of myself, for I have never been tempted to dine from home these last ten years; yet, although I am neither rich nor convivial, and hardly social, I have given at least a hundred in the time, if not superb, at least not sordid; and those who knew me long ago, say, Landor is become a miser... his father did otherwise."

"Cappari!" exclaimed Puntomichino; "this whole family, with thirty thousand crowns of income, has not done a ninetieth part of it within the memory of man."

"Faith! then," interrupted Talcranagh, "it must have come into the Russels by a forced adop-

tion. The Russels of England are of opinion, right or wrong, that the first thing are good principles, and the next...good cheer. I wish, sir," said he, looking mildly and somewhat mournfully at me, "I had not heard you say what you did: I began to think well of you, I know not why...and I doubt not still, God forbid I should, that you are a worthy and conscientious man; but I would fain have thought well of you. As for that other, I thank him for teaching me, what I never should have learned at home, that a fellow may be a good patriot with a very contracted heart, and as much ingratitude as he can carry to market. Why! you might trust a Correggio across his kitchen-chimney on christmas-day: aye, Signor Puntomichino?"

"Gentlemen," said our host, "under the least vindictive of princes we may talk as loudly as we please of liberty, which we could not do without fear and trembling when we were in the full enjoyment of it. What are you pondering so gravely, Mr. Talcranagh?"

"Woe!" replied he, "woe to the first family that ever dines yonder! Let them each take a bottle of thieves-vinegar, against the explosion of mould from the grand evolution of the tablecloth.

But about your ministers, there are some things not entirely to my mind, neither: your prince, I dare to say, knows nothing about them."

"Our ministers are liberal, my young friend. They have indeed betrayed in succession all the sovrans who have employed them, yet they let every man do his best or his worst; and if you are robbed or insulted, you may insult or robb again: all parties enjoy the same plenitude of power."

"Plenitude! by my soul, Sir Cavaliere, and a trifle, I think, to spare. One of them a few days ago did what a king of Great Britain and Ireland would not dare to do, and which, if the first potentate on earth had done in London, he would have been kicked down the stairs for his impudence. The exhibition of pictures at your Academy was announced as opening to the public at ten. His Excellency entered alone, and remained in the principal apartment until two, the doors of which were locked to others. If it had been possible for him to have acted so amongst us, he would have been tossed in a blanket till the stars blinked upon him; the people would have perfumed his frill and ruffles abundantly with home-made essences, would have added new decorations to his waist-

coatful of *orders*, and would have treated his eagles with more eggs than they could swallow.

"Believe me, sirs, our government, which would be a detestable one for the English, is an excellent one for us. Every day in London brings with it what to a stranger looks like a rebellion, or at best a riot: no mischief is done thereby: your strength, which causes this irregularity, sustains you: but weak bodies bear little fermentation."

"Wisely thought and well expressed. I am convinced that if we had not a riot now and then in Ireland, we should be as mopish and sullen as the English, or as insincere and ferocious as the French. And I have observed, Signor Cavaliere, that, strange as it may appear, whenever there has been much of a riot there has been sunshine. Smile as you will, Mr. Landor, I swear to the fact."

"Your assertion, Mr. Talcranagh, is quite sufficient: but is it impossible that the fine weather may have brought together a great concourse of people to the fair or festival, and that whiskey or beauty or politics or religion may have incited them to the exertion of their prowess?"

"There are causes that we know, and there are causes that we know not. Inquiry and reflection

are sensible things, but there is nothing like experience, nothing like seeing with one's own eyes. We must live upon the spot to judge perfectly and to collect all the evidences. Philosophy ought to lead us, but only to a certain point; there we leave her, and joy go with her. I have seen impudent rogues in Dublin, and have fancied that the world could not match them: now what think you of a set of fellows, with coats without a collar, who take us by the hand, and say with the gravest face upon earth, 'The elements shall be elements no longer,' and strip them one after another of their title-deeds, as easily as Lord ——— stripped the ———— of ———. It is enough to make one grave to think on this abuse of intellect. The acutest men may be much mistaken even after long experience. I assure you, I have found grossly inaccurate the first piece of information given me by a very cautious old traveler. He mentions the honesty of the Savoyards and the thievery of the Italians: now here have I been a fortnight, safe and sound, and have not lost a hair. I had not been twentyfour hours in Savoy when they had the meanness to steal my hatband. In future I shall be persuaded how illusory are sketches of national character. As for systems...come, Signor Cavaliere, you have

weighed them well; I have not patience to talk about them: conclusions are drawn even from skin and bones; eyes, noses, teeth; they will soon come (saving your presence) to..."

"I know not what they will come to," was the spirited and timely reply of the cavaliere, "but I can mention as wonderful a fact as the sunshine elicited by shilelahs. My father was a physiognomist, and when Lavater first published his work, 'Now,' cried he, rubbing the palms of his hands together, 'men begin to write again as they should do.' He insisted that a man's countenance, in all its changes, indicated his virtues or vices, his capacities or defects. The teeth, among other parts, were infallible indexes: they were in the human visage what consonants are in the alphabet, the great guides, the plain simple narrators. Amidst his apophthegms was, *never trust a man with a twisted tooth*. In fact, of all I had ever seen, and of all I have ever seen since, under that description, not an individual has proved worthy of trust. I once inquired of my father, with submission, whether age or accident might not alter the indications. *By no means*, exclaimed he emphatically; *if the indications are changed, the character is changed: God, before he removed the mark, removed the taint*. He remarked that,

where the teeth turned inward, there was wariness, selfishness, avarice, inhumanity; where they turned outward, there was lasciviousness, gaming, gluttony. I then doubted these indications, and imagined that a part of the latter was taken up against a priest, not indeed in high reputation for sobriety or continence, who had offended my father in a tender quarter. My father had erected a stile for the convenience of his peasants; but the inscription was so prolix*, that he was forced to engrave the conclusion of it upon the church-

* Lest an inscription on a stile should surpass the faith of my reader, I will transcribe one literally, *on a prince changing horses at a villa,* to the intent, as it says expressly, that *all men and nations and ages* should know it.

Honori Ferdinandi III. Aust:
qui ad veterem Etruriæ dominationem redux
in hoc Capponianæ gentis prætorio
xv. Kal. Octob. MDCCCXIV.
tantisper substitit,
dum rhedæ itinerariæ regalis substitueretur,
qua urbem principem inter communes plausus
et gaudii lacrimas introiret;
herisque ob faustitatem eventûs
dignitatemque sibi locoque ab hospite magno impertitam
lætitiâ elatis
pristinam benevolentiam comitate alloquii
gratique animi significatione declaravit;
Marchio Petrus Robertus Capponius
ad memoriam facti postgenitis omnibus tradendam.

porch. The Latin, as the priest acknowledged, was very classical, but he requested that it might be removed to our dovecote, which was farther off, and not by the side of any road. The exoteric teeth of the reverend gentleman had by some unknown accident received a blow, which adjusted them between the two extremes; and my father was asked in joke whether he had a better opinion of his spiritual guide since his improvement in dentition. 'Indeed I have,' he answered gravely; 'for so sudden and so great a change, whether brought about by the organic mutations of the frame, or by an irresistible stress, with which certain sentiments or sensations may bear upon it, must be accompanied by new powers, greater or smaller, and by new qualities and propensities. Some internal struggle may, in length of time, have produced an effect not only on the fibres but also through them on the harder part of the extremities.' The favorable opinion of my father was carried to the priest; who lamented, he said, no dispensation of Providence, by which he conciliated the better sentiments of so enlightened and charitable a man. He was soon a daily visitant at the house; he entered into the studies of his Excellency, read his observations, praised them highly, and by degrees had the courage to submitt to so experienced a

master a few remarks of his own. He pursued them farther: and I should blush to relate, if all Florence did not know it, that my stepmother, a young lady of twentyfour, aided him too deeply in his investigations, and confirmed my father, although not exactly by working the problem as he would have recommended, that an internal struggle may produce an effect, not only on the fibres, but also, through them, on the harder part of the extremities. Then too became it public, that another husband had been the holy man's dentist, in consequence of too close an application to similar studies in his house."

"Why! how! what! do you talk in this tone and manner! did not you nor your father flea the devil alive? did not you spigot him nor singe him?"

"I was at school: my father took his wife to Sienna; proof enough that he resented the injury. In our country, as you know, every lady of quality has her cavaliere servente, and you cannot pay a higher compliment to a man of rank than by calling him, in polite language, a son of a whore, which, if I remember, is somewhat like an affront in England, and not even the commonest person would thank you for it. Here however it serves to distinguish the superior order from the lower,

who aspire to nothing better than the liberty to stick their kneebuckles on their coats with a tag of scarlet. My father, as you may suppose, was indignant, that a priest out of the gates, neither a canonico nor a maestro di casa, should beget his children, and aspire, as he would have done by degrees, (for impudence is never retrogressive) to conduct his lady to her carriage. I have many books in which is the text written with his own hand, 'Never trust a man with a twisted tooth;' but I have searched in vain for any such sentence as 'Trust a man with an untwisted one.' His enthusiasm seems to have cooled, from the time that he found a scholar so capable of his place."

I have reported this Conversation in a manner differing from the rest. If illustrious characters have been invited to my entertainment,

Locus est et pluribus umbris.

The meaner of us have spoken but seldom, and indeed I have suppressed the greater part of my own remarks, and several of Mr. Talcranagh's. A conversation with a young Irishman of good natural abilities, and among no race of men are those abilities more general, is like a forest-walk; in which, while you are delighted with the healthy fresh air and the green unbroken turf, you must stop at

every twentieth step to extricate yourself from a briar. You acknowledge that you have been amused, but that you rest willingly, and that you would rather not take the same walk on the morrow.

CONVERSATION IX.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

AND

HORNE TOOKE.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

AND

HORNE TOOKE.

TOOKE.

Permitt me to congratulate you, Dr. Johnson, on the completion of your great undertaking: my bookseller sent me your Dictionary the day it issued from the press, and it has exercised ever since a considerable part of my time and attention.

JOHNSON.

Who are you, sir?

TOOKE.

My name is Horne Tooke.

JOHNSON.

What is my Dictionary, sir, to you?

TOOKE.

A treasure, I doubt not.

JOHNSON.

Keep it then at home and to yourself, sir, as you would any other treasure, and talk no more about it than you would about that.

TOOKE.

Doctor, my studies have led me some little way into etymology, and I am interested in whatever contributes to the right knowledge of our language.

JOHNSON.

Sir, have you redd our old authors?

TOOKE.

I have redd all of them that are printed and extant.

JOHNSON.

Prodigious! do you speak truth?

TOOKE.

To the best of my belief.

JOHNSON.

Sir, how could you, a firebrand tossed about by the rabble, a restless spirit, a demogorgon, find leisure for so much reading?

TOOKE.

The number of English books printed before the accession of James the first is smaller than you appear to imagine, and the manuscripts, I believe, are not numerous; certainly in the libraries

of our Universities they are rather scanty. I wish you had traced in your preface the changes made in the language these last three centuries, for which about three pages would have been sufficient. Our spelling hath undergone as many changes as the French, and worse.

JOHNSON.

The old writers had strange and arbitrary ways of spelling, which makes them appear more barbarous than they really are.

TOOKE.

You have now brought me to a question, which, if you will favour me a few moments, we will discuss. I perceive that you preferr the spelling of our gentlemen and ladies now flourishing, to that of Middleton and Milton.

JOHNSON.

Middleton is not so correct a writer as you fancy. He was an infidel, sir, and, what is worse, a scoffer.

TOOKE.

You will acknowledge that we have nothing so classical in our language as his *Life of Cicero*, nothing at once so harmonious and so unaffected.

JOHNSON.

Do you assert that Izaac Walton, who also wrote biography, is not equally unaffected?

TOOKE.

Unaffected he is, and equally so, but surely less harmonious. Allow me to join with you in admiration of this most natural writer and most virtuous man, whose volumes I read with greater pleasure than any excepting Shakespear's. There is indeed, as you appear to indicate, no similitude between them; no more, I confess it, than there is between a cowslip and the sun that shines upon it; but there is a perpetually pleasant light, if I may use the expression, reflected from every thought and sentence, and no man ever redd him without being for a time both happier and better. I, like yourself, have detected a few inaccuracies in Middleton; not in his reasonings and conclusions, for in these he is clear and strong, but in expressions of small importance. He says in his *Letter from Rome*, "The temple of some heathen deity *or* that of the Paphian Venus," p. 134. as if the Paphian Venus was not a heathen deity. "Popery, *which* abounds with instances of the grossest forgeries both of saints and reliques, *which* have been *imposed for genuine*, &c." p. 171. To have been *forgeries*, they must have been *imposed for genuine:* here is also a confusion in the repetition of *which*, relating to two subjects; as again "The prejudices *which* the authority of so

celebrated a writer may probably *inject* to the disadvantage of my argument, *which*, &c." p. 224.

JOHNSON.

If Warburton had been elegant in language as he was acute in argument, he would have exposed to ridicule such an expression as *inject a prejudice.*

TOOKE.

His acuteness seems usually to have forsaken him the moment he lost his malignity. Nothing is weaker than his argument on this question, nothing more inelegant than his phraseology. Our pugnacious bishop, although he defended the divine legation of Moses, would have driven the chariot of Pharaoh against him into the Red-sea. You remember the verses, I know not by whom.

> If Warburton by chance should meet
> The twelve apostles in the street,
> He 'd pick a quarrel with 'em all,
> And shove his Saviour from the wall.

He says, in allusion to Middleton, "How many able writers have employed *their* time and learning to prove christian Rome to have borrowed *their* superstitions from the pagan city?" He means her superstitions, and not the superstitions of the *able writers*, which the words, as they stand, designate. He surely could not dissent from Mid-

dleton, with whom nearly all the papists agree, drawing however far different inferences.

JOHNSON.

On this ground I go with Middleton; he states an historical fact: he states a thing visible: but while he pretends to approach Religion for the sake of looking at her dress, he stabs her. Come, sir! come, sir! philology rather than this!

TOOKE.

A little more then of philology: but first let me suggest to you that no stab, my good doctor, can inflict a dangerous wound on Truth. Homer had probably the design of impressing some such sentiment, when he said that celestial bodies soon unite again. If you have ever had the curiosity to attend a course of lectures on chemistry, or have resided in the house of any friend who cultivates it, you may perhaps have observed how a single drop of colourless liquid, poured on another equally colourless, raises a sudden cloud and precipitates it to the bottom. So unsuspected falsehood, taken up as pure and limpid, is thrown into a turbid state by a drop; and it does not follow that the drop must be of poison. Middleton is once or twice vulgar: he writes "*for good and all,*" p. 286. This is somewhat in the manner of your friend Edmund Burke, who uses the word

anotherguess; in which expression are both vulgarity and ignorance; the real term is *anotherguise;* there is nothing of *guessing*.

JOHNSON.

Edmund Burke, sir, is so violent a reformer that I am confident he will die a tory. I am surprised that any thing he does or says should encounter your disapprobation. He, sir, and Junius should have been your favorites, if indeed they are not one and the same: for Edmund writes better when he writes for another, and any character suits him rather than his own. Shenstone, when he forgot his Strephons and Corydons, and followed Spenser, became a poet. Your old antagonist Junius (what makes you smile, sir?) wears an elegant sword-knot, and swaggers bravely. What think you?

TOOKE.

Of Junius I would rather say little, for more reasons than one. His words are always elegant, his sentences always sonorous, his attacks always vigorous, and rarely (although I may be a sufferer by asserting it) misplaced. Still however those only can be called great writers, who bring to bear on their subject more than a few high faculties of the mind. I require in him whom I am to acknowledge so, accuracy of perception, variety of

mood, of manner, and of cadence, imagination, reflection, force, sweetness, copiousness, depth, perspicuity. I require in him a princely negligence of little things, and the proof that although he hath seized much, he hath also left much unappropriated. Let me see nothing too trim, nothing quite incondite. Equal solicitude is not to be exerted upon all ideas alike; some are brought into the fullness of light, some are adumbrated: so on the beautiful plant of our conservatories, a part is in fruit, a part in blossom; not a branch is leafless, not a spray is naked. Then come those graces and allurements, for which we have few and homely names, but which among the ancients had many, and expressive of delight and of divinity, *illecebræ, veneres:* these, like the figures that hold the lamps on staircases, both invite us and shew us the way up: for, write as wisely as we may, we cannot fix the minds of men upon our writings, unless we take them gently by the ear.

JOHNSON.

Here we meet and agree, but you exact too much: you include too many great properties within your stipulations.

TOOKE.

In Junius several of these were uncalled-for;

some that would have been welcome were away; and in my opinion he is hardly a great writer in whom any thing that is great is wanting.

JOHNSON.

Sometimes even Cicero himself is defective both in ratiocination and in euphony.

TOOKE.

The two most perfect writers (I speak of style) are Demosthenes and Pascal; but all their writings put together are not worth a twentieth part of what remains to us of Cicero; nor can it be expected that the world will produce another (for the causes of true eloquence are extinct) who shall write at the same time so correctly, so clearly, so delightfully, so wisely.

JOHNSON.

Let him give way, sir, let him give way, for your *rump-parliament* and regicide. The causes of true eloquence are extinct! I understand you, sir: rump and regicide for ever!

TOOKE.

Doctor, I am not one of those who would agitate so idle a question, as, whether it is the part of a contemptible man, much less whether it is that of a criminal one, to scoff at superstitions forbidden by the religion of our country, or to punish with death and ignominy, a torturer, a

murderer, a tyrant, a violator of all his oaths, and a subverter of all his laws!

JOHNSON.

That sentence, sir, is too graceful for mouths like yours. *Burn, sink, and destroy* are words of better report from the hustings.

TOOKE.

I presume you mean, doctor, when they are directed by pious men, against men of the same language and lineage: for words, like cyphers, have their value from their place. I am sorry that you seem offended.

JOHNSON.

It is the nature of the impudent never to be angry.

TOOKE.

Impudence, I find, is now for the first time installed among the christian virtues.

JOHNSON.

No, sir: impudence is to virtue what cynicism is to stoicism: nothing is harder or crueller; nothing seems less so.

TOOKE.

Doctor, let me present to you this cup of tea.

JOHNSON.

Why! the man wears upon his mind an odd party-coloured jacket; half courtier, half rebel.

I do not think I have flattered him very much, yet he bowed as if he was suing me to dance with him.

Mr. Tooke, let us avoid these thorns and brambles...come forth, sir, and fight your battle with Dyche. What have you to say against our manner of spelling?

TOOKE.

Persons very unlearned, such as Swift and others, have from their natural acuteness perceived the utility of *fixing*, as they call it, our language. This is impossible in any: but it is possible to do much, and an authority like yours would have effected it, in perpetuating the orthography. On the contrary, I observe in your Dictionary some quotations, in which the words are spelt differently from what I find them in the originals; nor have you admitted all those in Littleton, who compiled his Latin Dictionary at a recent period.

JOHNSON.

First, I wrote the words as people now receive them; then, as to Littleton, many of his are vulgar.

TOOKE.

The more English for that: no expression, be it only free from indecency, is so vulgar, that a

man of learning and genius may not formerly have used it: but there are many so frivolous and fantastical, that they cannot, to the full extent of the word, ever become vulgar. There are but three places where such bad language is tolerated and acknowledged; the boxing-ring, the race-course, and the House of Commons.

JOHNSON.

I could wish our Senate to have deserved as well of ours as the Roman did of theirs. Illiterate men, and several such are among the correspondents of Cicero, write with as much urbanity and purity as himself, and it is remarkable that the only one of them defective in these qualities is Marcus Antonius. But pray give me some instances in which the old spelling should be retained, for I am unwilling to suppose that you would innovate.

TOOKE.

Many must escape me, and others are but analogical: I will then bring forward only those which occurr principally. The very word which has just passed my lips, *occurr*, is written improperly with a single *r*. The impropriety is demonstrated by its preterite, which would be *occured*, for the sign of the preterite is *ed*, in similar verbs, not *red*. The same may be remarked on the verbs

rebel, compel, &c. *aver, demur, appal, acquit, permit, refit, confer,* &c. If these were printed as they ought to be, strangers would more easily know that the accent is on the final syllable. We ourselves in some instances have lost the right accent of words. In my youth he would have been ridiculed who placed it upon the first syllable of *confiscated, contemplative,* at which the ear revolts: in many other compounds we thrust it thus back with equal precipitancy and rudeness.

If we take away a letter from those I have stated, we add one with as little discernment to *therefor* and *wherefor:* we should as reasonably write *thereofe, whereofe, thereine, whereine:* strictly, it would be better to take away one *e* more, and write *therfor,* &c. I know the origin of the error; the origin may *explane,* but not *excuse.* It is this: the ancients wrote *therforre:* the useless *r* was removed from an infinity of words, and those who removed it in this instance, were little aware that they had better left it, unless they also took away the *e.* Middleton writes *declame,* and elegantly. Milton writes *sovran* and *foren,* equally so: for neither the pronunciation nor the etymology authorizes the vitiated mode in

common use. These writers may be considered as modern, and must be considered as learned and eloquent. Until men who are more so write differently, these shall be my guides. *Heighth* and *neighbour* should be written *highth* and *nighbour:* the former comes from *high*, not *heigh!* the latter from *nigh*, not *neigh*.

Rind, *bind*, *mind*, *find*, *wind* (the verb), *kind*, *blind*, &c. are better written as they were formerly, with a final *e*, as also *child*, *wild*, *mild;* that the sound may accord with the spelling, which should always be the case where no very powerful reason interposes its higher authority. I do not see why *little*, *able*, *probable*, &c. should not be written *littel*, *abil*, *probabil:* as *civil* forms *civility*, so *abil* forms *ability*, *probabil* forms *probability:* the others, as we corruptly use them, form *ablety* and *probablety*. There is also another reason: in verse there is an hiatus when they come before a vowel, which hiatus could not exist if we followed what analogy prescribes. I strongly object to *subtle* and *subtlety*, and would propose *subtil* and *subtility*. Those who polish language, like those who clean pictures, often rubb away the true colouring. Roughness, you will tell me, is removed by the process of the moderns. I could

adduce no few instances to the contrary. Now do you imagine that the fashionable way of writing *empress's son*, if we *could* pronounce it accordingly, would be better than *empressis?* No other language in the world (for though the serpent could once speak he could never write) presents four *esses* in conjunction. The final *s* hath nothing to do with, what Addison and others have substituted for it, *his*: it is among our few declined cases.

JOHNSON.

Who would not rather say *son of the empress?*

TOOKE.

I talk of what exists in the language, not of what is best in it: nor indeed would your alteration be preferable in all contingencies. What, for instance, think you of this? "*We have heard of the ill state of health of the son of the empress of Russia.*" The double genitive ought to be avoided as much as possible in all composition: it has however a worse effect in modern languages than in ancient. To ours the ancient termination designating it, is highly advantageous. It has not only two genitives, but, let me also remark to you, it has a greater variety of sounds in it than any other I know.

JOHNSON.

Surely not than the Greek.

TOOKE.

Beyond a question; if you acknowledge that the Greeks, who have never lost their language, know how to pronounce it better than we do. Their diphthongs are almost insensibly so: we give to their *ai* and *oi* our own deepmouthed tone, our own exclusively, as is that of *i* in *mine*, &c.

Returning to the *s*, although we have one word of nine letters in which it occurs five times, and another of only eight in which it appears as often (*possesses* and *assesses*), yet I once from curiosity examined a hundred verses in Shakespear and the same number in Sophocles, and found it more frequent in the latter. If I had counted the *exes* and *xis*, the *zeds* and *zetas*, and the *psis*, which contain it, the difference would have been still greater. It is true, the Greek iambic contains more syllables than ours, but the number of letters is very nearly the same in each.

JOHNSON.

I am unsatisfied, after all, that the English *is*, whether joined to the word or disjoined from it, whether in full or in contraction,

may not be *his*, as our grammarians have supposed.

TOOKE.

That it has not relation to *his*, may be demonstrated, by its being common to both male and female, to both singular and plural: we say not only *Edwin's book*, but *Emma's book*, and, with as little hesitation, *men's minds*.

There are some words which, if we receive them, we cannot spell rightly; they have been so perverted by custom: such are *amaze*, a *newt;* the first of which was a *maze*, the last an *evet*. So the French *affaire*, and the Italian *affare; à faire, a fare;* demonstrable in the latter by the earlier word, still equally in common use, *facenda*, res *facienda*. We see written *mantua*-maker, for *manteau*-maker, a vulgar and ludicrous error: we see also *ameliorate* for *meliorate*, although one would reasonably suppose that it signified the reverse. We write *posthumous*, in the silly opinion that the word is derived from *post* and *humus*: the termination in fact is nowise different from that of *maxumus* and *optumus*, in the Latin, although, by one of the chances so common in language, it has escaped that change in the middle syllable which the others have undergone. There are also some few inaccuracies, wherinto our most

applauded speakers, and our least objectionable writers, have fallen. For instance, *I had rather not go: you had better not do it.* This error arises from ambiguity of sound... *I'd* rather, or *I'ou'd* rather; contractions of *would*, and pronounced more like *had*. We often hear, *the first amongst them*.

JOHNSON.

Well, why not?

TOOKE.

Because what is *first* or *before*, is not *amongst*.

JOHNSON.

You might argue then that what is *before* is not *of*, and that it has ceased to be so when, in the nautical phrase, it has parted company: yet surely you do not object to the expression, "the first of them."

TOOKE.

It has not ceased to be *of* by being *before*: for *of* is *off*, however we may, for obvious reasons, separate them in the parts of speech. You toss your head about, doctor: is there *fœnum in cornu?* must I make my escape? or will you accept my apology for so deep an encroachment on your time and patience?

JOHNSON.

If your arguments were always as just and in-

nocent, I should not decline your conversation, but on the contrary should solicit from you a catalogue of such peculiarities and defects, as a profound insight into our language, and a steady investigation of its irregularities and intricacies, have enabled you to remark.

CONVERSATION X.

ANDREW HOFFER, COUNT METTERNICH,

AND

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

ANDREW HOFFER,

COUNT METTERNICH,

AND

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

METTERNICH.

WHO are you, man? I hear you have brought some intelligence from the Tyrol. Be brief; I have little time for audiences, and am surprised that you should have required one, although you mountaineers are somewhat used to liberties. What, in few words, have you brought from your country?

HOFFER.

This.

METTERNICH.

No enigmas: at the court of Vienna we understand no other than plain language.

HOFFER.

Your Excellency commanded me to be brief: I was so. This is the heron's feather which moved merrily over the Alps when not an eagle's was

stirring. If the slaughter of thirty thousand enemies is worth a recompense, I come, at the instigation of those who followed me, to ask one.

METTERNICH.

I expected it: never was an audience asked of me, or of any other minister, which did not begin or end so. But, friend, many years of war have exhausted the treasury, England is penurious, and we have innumerable young men, of high rank and great promise, disappointed in their hopes of preferment: besides, who ordered you to take up arms?

HOFFER.

My oath of allegiance, the voice of my country, my hatred of the French, and my contempt of the Italians, by whom principally our towns and villages were garrisoned.

METTERNICH.

You would fain be another William Tell.

HOFFER.

As willingly as William Tell, now among the saints in heaven, would, if he were living, be another Andrew Hoffer. We are creatures too humble for jealousy: we have neither rank nor beauty, neither silk breeches nor powdered wig; we write no poems, challenge no club for attention, and solicit no clerk for preferment.

METTERNICH.

I have read your name in the French gazettes, and you have just now mentioned it, I think, but really I quite forget what it may be.

HOFFER.

Andrew Hoffer!

METTERNICH.

Such is the tenderness of the emperor my master for those who have served him faithfully, that, although you are no longer his subject, still, as you are a person of known bravery, and of some repute in your neighbourhood, if you will only change your name and enter into the service as an Austrian, I myself will venture to mention you as worthy of the earliest promotion, and, within three or four years at farthest, I entertain the best founded hopes that you may be made a corporal.

HOFFER.

Excellent sir, I do not ask so much.

METTERNICH.

A little money, if I could dispose of it, should not be wanting...but...

HOFFER.

Pardon me, sir, an interruption to the current of your kindness. I have grain and wine, under a certain rock I could mention, with two hundred

crowns, and my freehold may be valued at twelve hundred more, and I have children who are brave and healthy, who love their father and fear God.

METTERNICH.

You want something, and it is neither money nor promotion. I believe I am as acute as most people, yet here I confess my dulness.

HOFFER.

If I have devoted my little property, which is always dearer to the possessor than a great one, as every shrub and hillock is familiar to him, and the scene of some joviality, some tenderness, or some kindness; if I have hazarded and exposed my life in all places and seasons, for him whom we both are serving, grant me only a cell or a dungeon in this city. I have a country to defend, I have a family to educate, I have duties to teach and to perform; and your Excellency knows that the French police has traced me into the Austrian states, and has demanded that I should be delivered up. Never shall this happen. I could not preserve the dominions of my master, but I will preserve his honour. Little did I ever dream of prisons: to us Tyrolese they are horrible as hell, and like hell the abodes of crime only; but he whom I have sworn to obey must do nothing unworthy of his name and station. Rather would I

waste away my strength in this dreary asylum, rather would I live among the unholy and unjust, rather would I, if such be God's ordinance, lose the blossoming of my brave lads at home, which is worth a thousand times more, not only than all the future, but than all the past of life. There are those about them who will tell them of me, and there are places to take them into, on the cliffs and in the vallies, in many a copse and craggy lane, where my name, summer or winter, will sound in their ears right well.

METTERNICH.

Mr. Hoffer, I cannot enter into these discussions. It appears by your own acknowledgement that there will be little loss on either side. Your children will be taken care of, you say, whatever may happen, and a trifle at most can be the damage to your affairs. What then do you miss?

HOFFER.

The sight of my native hills, my homestead, my gardenplot of sweet herbs, the young apple-trees in my croft, the friends of my youth, the companions of my dangers, and the associates of many a freak and frolic, requiring no less enterprise. I lose above all...but alas! what are the children of the great to them! You stared at me, sir count, when I spoke to you of mine. One

would imagine that *family* meaned coaches, horses, grooms, liveries, and gravy-spoons: one would imagine there were some indecency in the word *child*. Believe me, sir, they are different things with us from what they are with you. If you happen to cherish them, it is that they may carry a lily, a lion, a bear, a serpent, a bird, when you have done with it. I love in them, yes, beyond my own soul, God forgive me! the very worst things about them; their unparriable questions, triumphant screams, and boisterous embraces. It is true, I never talked of them before so; but they are now beyond hale or whistle far enough.

METTERNICH.

I shall be happy to expedite the business of your petition, from which it appears to me, my friend, you have somewhat deviated, forgetting the exact place and circumstances where you are.

HOFFER.

Excuse me, sir, once more: I acknowledge my error: I have been discoursing as if all the cloth in the world were of one colour and one fineness, and as if a man who goes upon two legs were equal to one who goes upon eight or sixteen, with a varnished plank betwixt, and another man's rear at his nostrils.

METTERNICH.

The brute! Others may have the same pretensions as you, and it would be difficult to protect all we would favour.

HOFFER.

I stand alone in this proscription. Pretensions I have none: my country has used me as she would a trumpet: I was in her hands what she wished me to be and what she made me. Whether her brave hearts followed me or followed this feather, what matters it? I am not better than those of them who are with God: had I been so, he would have called me among the first. Those who are yet living wish to reserve me for another day, if another, such as brave men pant for, is decreed us.

FRANCIS, *entering*.

Sit still: who is that man, count, stroking his cock's feather with his fore-finger?

METTERNICH.

It is the Andrew...Hoffer...I think it is written.

FRANCIS.

I wish we were fairly rid of him.

HOFFER.

Sir, your countenance did not inspire me in the beginning with much confidence. When you en-

tered, I observed that you dared not meet an honest man's eye.

METTERNICH.

Audacious! do you know...

FRANCIS.

We may draw something from him: let him go on. Are we safe, Metternich? He is a strong rogue: I do not like his looks.

HOFFER.

It becomes not me to be angry with any one; but until I asked a favour from you, it would have been well in you to leave his Excellency to his own kind intentions. The little good that drips from the higher sources, is intercepted or corrupted by secretaries, clerks, valets, and other such people as you.

FRANCIS.

What does he want?

METTERNICH.

A place in prison.

FRANCIS.

Give him it.

HOFFER.

I thank you, friend. If you are idle, as you seem to be, pray shew me the way: come along: we are losing time.

FRANCIS.

Make out the order: send him off.

HOFFER.

The gentleman is gone then! He gave his advice very fluently, almost as if he directed. When I would have embraced him for his readiness to serve me, his breath drove me back. O for a fresh pipe of tobacco! a bundle of sweet hay! a sprig of thyme! a bean-flower. Other creatures have each his own peculiar ill savour, and that suffices for the whole of him; but men, and in particular those of cities, have beds and parterres and plots and knots of stinks, varying in quality from the dells and dingles to the mountain-top. There are people who stink heart and soul: their bodies are the best of them. Away with these fellows! I would not be a materialist if I could help it; I was educated in no such bestiality; but is it possible that God should ever have intended such spirits as these to be immortal?

METTERNICH.

Friend, it is not permitted in any public office to exceed the business to be transacted there. I will venture to pronounce that yours is the first reflection ever made in one; and it affords no proof of your delicacy or discretion. If you wish

protection, never hazard a remark of any kind, unless you intend it for publication: in that case the censor will judge of its propriety, and it may do you no harm. Write freely; write every thing you please: high souls are privileged at Vienna.

Soldier, take this note to the governor, as directed: you may accompany him, Mr. Hoffer.

HOFFER.

To the governor! Do favour me, sir, with a prison.

METTERNICH.

I do so.

HOFFER.

But without sending me to his excellency the governor of the city.

METTERNICH.

My note is addressed to the governor of the prison.

HOFFER.

What! are jailers called governors?

METTERNICH.

God's blood! the fellow asks questions: he examines ranks and dignities. Fare you well, Mr. Hoffer: God preserve you, in reward of your zeal and fidelity.

FRANCIS (*returning*).

Is he gone?

METTERNICH.

This instant, sire.

FRANCIS.

The French minister is very urgent in the business: what is to be done?

METTERNICH.

I am afraid, he must be surrendered.

FRANCIS.

The empress says that all Europe would cry out against it, as an action the most ungenerous and ungrateful: such are her words.

METTERNICH.

With your Majesty's permission, I not only would oppose to them the opinion of all the archdukes and of the whole aulic council, but could also prove the contrary by plain and irrefragable arguments. Ungenerous it cannot be, because he desired no reward, and none was in question. Ungrateful it cannot be; for kings and emperors are exempt by the nature of things from that odious vice. It is the duty of all subjects to do their utmost for the advantage of the prince: nothing is owing to them for an act of duty: duty is the payer, not the receiver. Whatever is accorded by a sovran to his vassal is granted by special favour; a signification of being pleased, a testimonial of being served, a patent to the person

thus gratified that he is at full liberty to serve and please again. There can be gratitude only where there are obligations and duties; and to suppose any in reciprocity between prince and people, is rank jacobinism.

FRANCIS.

Insurgents talk always of their country; a term which I would willingly never hear at all, and which no good subject ever utters in the first place. *Emperor and country, king and country*, we may bear; but hardly; although I have been assured that such phrases are uttered by many well-meaning men: but who ever heard of *country and emperor, country and king?* The times are bad enough; still the subversion of right principles is not yet universal and complete.

METTERNICH.

What orders then would your Majesty give, relating to this Andrew Hoffer?

FRANCIS.

He appears an irreverent, rash, hot-headed man: he could however be kept in order, as I said yesterday, by entering into one of my Austrian regiments, by going into Transylvania, or by lying a few years in the debtor's prison; and perhaps the French government, after a time, would be satisfied with the arrangement. To deliver him up,

is, after all, the more conformable to the desires of Bonaparte; and he can do me more injury than Hoffer can do me good.

METTERNICH.

Your Majesty has contemplated the matter in its true political point of view, and is persuaded that those few diamonds, of which I informed your Majesty as usual, have no influence on my sentiments. I would not even deliver my opinion; but hearing your Majesty's, it is my duty to see that your imperial will and pleasure be duly executed.

The following hendecasyllables were written on the surrender of Andrew Hoffer to the French.

Hoffer, quot misero vigere sæclo
Nuper vidimus, haud secunde cuiquam,
Quid profecerit ista tanta virtus!
An belli socius supersit unus
Qui tecum fuerit jugis nivosis,
Dum subter larices nigrasque pinus
Cœlo sidera concidunt inani?
Clusus carcere providis amicis,
Ut longam effugeres manum tyranni;
A quo proderis? ah! quid hoc rogemus?
Natam tradiderat prius latroni.
Atqui mollior ala servitutis
Certe gentibus incubat receptis...
Quod ferrum fuit antea, ecce plumbum!

CONVERSATION XI.

DAVID HUME

AND

JOHN HOME.

DAVID HUME

AND

JOHN HOME.

HUME.

We Scotchmen, sir, are somewhat proud of our families and relationships: this is however a nationality which perhaps I should not have detected in myself, if I had not been favoured with the flattering present of your tragedy. Our names, as often happens, are spelt differently; but I yielded with no reluctance to the persuasion, that we are, and not very distantly, of the same stock.

HOME.

I hope, sir, our mountains will detain you amongst them some time, and I presume to promise you that you will find in Edinburgh a society as polished and literate as in Paris.

HUME.

As literate I can easily believe, my cousin, and perhaps as polished, if you reason upon the ingredients of polish: but there is certainly much more amenity and urbanity at Paris than anywhere else in the world, and people there are less likely to give and take offence. All topics may be discussed without arrogance and superciliousness: an atheist would see you worship a stool, or light a candle at noon, without a sneer at you; and a bishop, if you were well-dressed and perfumed, would argue with you calmly and serenely though you doubted the whole Athanasian creed.

HOME.

So much the worse: God forbid we should ever experience this lukewarmness in Scotland.

HUME.

God, it appears, has forbidden it: for which reason, to shew my obedience and submission, I live as much as possible in France, where at present God has forbidden no such thing.

HOME.

Religion, my dear sir, can alone make men happy and keep them so.

HUME.

Nothing is better calculated to make men happy than religion, if you will allow them to manage it

according to their minds; in which case the strong men hunt down others, until they can fold them, entrapp them, or noose them. Here however let the discussion terminate. Both of us have been in a cherry orchard, and have observed the advantages of the jacket, hat, and rattle.

HOME.

Our reformed religion does not authorize any line of conduct diverging from right reason: we are commanded by it to speak the truth to all men.

HUME.

Are you also commanded to hear it from all men?

HOME.

Yes, let it only be proved to be truth.

HUME.

I doubt the fact: on the contrary, you will not even let it be proved: you resist the attempt: you blockade the preliminaries. Religion, as you practise it in Scotland, in some cases is opposite to reason and subversive of happiness.

HOME.

In what instance?

HUME.

If you had a brother whose wife was unfaithful to him, without his suspicion, if he lived with her

happily, if he had children by her, if others of which he was fond could be proved by you, and you only, not to be his, what would you do?

HOME.

O the strumpet! we have none such here, excepting the wife indeed (as we hear she is) of a little lame blear-eyed lieutenant, brought with him from Sicily, and bearing a *wee* Etna of her own about her, and truly no quiescent or intermittent one, which Mungo Murray (the apprentice of Hector Abercrombie) tells me *has boiled* over upon half the young dissolutes in the parish.

HUME.

But, if you had one such...

HOME.

Out upon her! should my brother cohabit with her? should my nephews be defrauded of their patrimony by bastards?

HUME.

You would then destroy his happiness, and his children's; for, supposing that you preserved to them a scanty portion more of fortune (which you could not do), still the shame they would feel from their mother's infamy would much outweigh it.

HOME.

I do not see clearly that this is a question of religion.

HUME.

All the momentous actions of religious men are referable to their religion more or less nearly; all the social duties, and surely these are implicated here, are connected with it.

Suppose again that you knew a brother and sister, who, born in different countries, met at last, ignorant of their affinity, and married.

HOME.

Poor blind sinful creatures! God be merciful to them!

HUME.

I join you heartily in the prayer, and would only add to it, man be merciful to them also! Imagine them to have lived together ten years, to have a numerous and happy family, to come and reside in your parish, and the attestation of their prior relationship to be made indubitable to you, by some document which alone could establish and record it; what would you do?

HOME.

I would snapp asunder the chain that the devil had ensnared them in, even if he stood before me, imploring God to pardon them, and to survey with an eye of mercy their unoffending bairns.

HUME.

And would not you also be disposed to behold them with an eye of the same materials?

HOME.

Could I leave them in mortal sin? a prey to the ensnarer of souls! No; I would rush between them, as with a flaming sword; I would rescue them by God's help from perdition.

HUME.

What misery and consternation would this rescue bring with it!

HOME.

They would call upon the hills to cover them, to crush and extinguish their shame.

HUME.

Those who had lived together in love and innocence and felicity! A word spoken to them by their pastor brings them into irremediable guilt and anguish. And you would do this?

HOME.

The laws of God are above all other laws: his ways are inscrutable: thick darkness covers his throne.

HUME.

My cousin, you who have written so elegant and pathetic a tragedy, cannot but have redd the best contrived one in existence, the Edipus of Sophocles.

HOME.

It has wrung my heart, and has deluged my eyes.

HUME.

Which would you rather do; cause and excite those sufferings, or assuage and quell them?

HOME.

Am I a Scotchman or an islander of the Red-sea, that a question like this should be asked me?

HUME.

You would not then have given to Edipus that information which drove him and Jocasta to despair.

HOME.

To him no: but as a christian and a minister of the gospel, I am commanded to defy the devil, and to burst asunder the bonds of sin.

HUME.

I am certain you would be greatly pained in doing it.

HOME.

I should never overcome the grief and anxiety so severe a duty would cause me.

HUME.

You have now proved better than I could have done in twenty *Essays*, that, if morality is not religion, neither is religion morality. Either of them, to be good, (and the one must be and the

other should be so) will produce good effects from the beginning to the end, and be followed by no remorse or repentance.

To produce as much happiness as we can, and to prevent as much misery, is the proper aim and end of all true morality and all true religion.

Only give things their right direction: there is room; do but place and train them well.

HOME.

What! room for vice and wickedness?

HUME.

There was a time when what is wine was not wine, when what is vinegar was not vinegar, when what is corruption was not corruption. That which would turn into vice, may not only not turn into it, but may, by discreet and attentive management, become the groundwork of virtue. A little watchfulness over ourselves will save us a great deal of watchfulness over others, and will permitt the kindliest of religions to dropp her inconvenient and unseemly talk, of enmity and strife, cuirasses and breastplates, battles and exterminations.

HOME.

These carnal terms are frequent in the books of the Old Testament.

HUME.

Because the books of the Old Testament were written when the world was much more barbarous and ferocious than it is at present; and all legislators must accommodate their language to the customs and manners of the country.

HOME.

Apparently you would rather abolish the strong language and forcible expressions of our pious reformers than the abominations at which their souls revolted. I am afraid you would hesitate as little to demolish kirks, as convents, to drive out ministers, as monks.

HUME.

I would let ministers and their kirks alone. I would abolish monasteries; but gradually and humanely; and not until I had discovered how and where the studious and pious could spend their time better. I hold religion in the light of a medal, which has contracted rust from ages. This rust seems to have been its preserver for many centuries, but after some few more will certainly be its consumer, and leave no vestige of effigy or superscription behind: it should be detached carefully and patiently, not ignorantly and rudely scoured off. Happiness may be taken away from many with the design of communicating it to

more: but that which is a grateful and refreshing odour in a limited space, would be none whatever in a larger; that which is comfortable warmth to the domestic circle, would not awaken the chirping of a cricket, or stimulate the flight of a butterfly, in the forest; that which satisfies a hundred poor monks, would, if thrown open to society at large, contribute not an atom to its benefit and emolument. Placid tempers, regulated habitudes, consolatory visitations, are suppressed and destroyed, and nothing rises from their ruins. Better let the cell be standing than level it only for the thorn and nettle.

HOME.

What good do these idlers, with their cords and mallets, or, if you please, with those regularities?

HUME.

These have their value, at least to the possessor and the few about him. Ask rather, what is the worth of his abode to the prince or to the public? who is the wiser for his cowl, the warmer for his frock, the more contented for his cloister, when they are taken from them? Monks, it is true, are only as stars that shine upon the desert: but tell me, I beseech you, who caused such a desert in the moral world, and who rendered so faint a light, in some of its periods, a blessing? Ignorant

rulers, must be the answer, and inhuman laws. These should cease to exist some time before their antidotes, however ill-compounded, are cast away.

If we had lived seven or eight centuries ago, John Home would probably, at this hour, have been saying mass at the altar, and David Hume, fatter and lazier, would have been pursuing his theological studies in the convent. We are so much the creatures of times and seasons, so modified and fashioned by them, that the very plants upon the wall, if they were as sensible as some suppose them to be, would laugh at us.

HOME.

Fantastic forms and ceremonies are rather what the true philosopher will reprehend. Stripp away these, reduce things to their primitive state of purity and holiness, and nothing can alter or shake us, clinging, as we should do, to nothing but the anchor of Faith.

HUME.

People clung to it long ago; but many lost their grasp, benumbed by holding too tight. The church of Scotland brings close together the objects of veneration and abhorrence. The evil principle, or devil, was, in my opinion, hardly worth the expense of his voyage from Persia; but, since you

have him, you seem resolved to treat him nobly, hating him, defying him, and fearing him neverthe-less. I would not however place him so very near the Creator, let his pretensions, from custom and precedent, be what they may.

HOME.

He is always marring the fair works of our heavenly Father: in this labour is his only proximity.

HUME.

You represent him as spurring men on to wickedness, from no other motive than the pleasure he experiences in rendering them miserable.

HOME.

He has no other, excepting his inveterate spite and malice against God, from which indeed, to speak more properly, this desire originates.

HUME.

Has he lost his wits, as well as his station, that he fancies he can render God unhappy by being spiteful and malicious? You wrong him greatly; but you wrong God more: for in all Satan's attempts to seduce men into wickedness, he leaves every one his free-will and liberty, either to resist or yield; but the heavenly Father, as you would represent him, predestines the greater part of mankind to everlasting pains and torments ante-

cedently to corruption or temptation. There is no impiety in asking you which is the worst: for impiety most certainly does not consist in setting men right on what is demonstrable in their religion, nor in shewing them that God is greater and better, than, with all their zeal for him, they have ever thought him.

HOME.

This is to confound religion with philosophy, the source of every evil, and of every error.

HUME.

Religion is the elder sister of philosophy; on whatever subjects they may differ, it is unbecoming in either to quarrel, and most of all so about their inheritance.

HOME.

And have you nothing, sir, to say against the pomps and vanities of other worships, that you should assail the institutions of your native country? To fear God, I must suppose then, is less meritorious, than to build steeples, and embroider surplices, and compose chaunts, and blow the bellows of organs.

HUME.

My dear sir, it is not that God is delighted with hymns and instruments of music, or that he prefers base to tenor or tenor to base, or Handel

to Giles Halloway, that nations throng to celebrate in their churches his power and his beneficence: it is not that Inigo Jones, or Christopher Wren, could erect to him an habitation more worthy of his presence, than the humblest cottage or the loneliest moor: it is that the best feelings, the highest faculties, the greatest wealth, should be displayed and exercised in the patrimonial palace of every family united...for such are churches both to the rich and poor.

HOME.

Your hand, David! Pardon me, sir; the sentiment carried me beyond custom; for it recalled to me the moments of blissful enthusiasm when I was writing my tragedy, and charmed me the more as coming from you.

HUME.

I explain the causes of things, and leave them.

HOME.

Go on, sir, pray go on; for here we can walk together. Suppose that God never heard us, never cared for us: do those hear you, whose exploits you celebrate at public dinners, our Wallaces and Bruces? Yet are not we the braver, the more generous, the more grateful?

HUME.

I do not see clearly how the more grateful: but

I would not analyse by reducing to a cinder a lofty sentiment.

HOME.

Every act of Gratitude is rewarded by reproduction. Justice is often pale and melancholy; but Gratitude, her daughter, is constantly in the flow of spirits and the bloom of loveliness. You call out to her when you fancy she is passing, you want her for your dependents, your domestics, your friends, your children. The ancients, as you know, habitually asked their gods and goddesses, by which of their names it was most agreeable to them to be invoked: now let Gratitude be, what for the play of our fancy, we have just imagined her, a sensible living power; I cannot think of any name more likely to be pleasing to her, than Religion. The simplest breast often holds more reason in it than it knows of, and more than Philosophy looks for or suspects. We almost as frequently despise what is not despicable as we admire and reverence what is. No nation in the world was ever so enlightened, and in all parts and qualities so civilized as the Scotch. Why would you shake or unsettle or disturb those principles, which have rendered us peaceable and contented?

HUME.

I would not by any means.

HOME.

Many of your writings have evidently such a tendency.

HUME.

Those of my writings to which you referr will be read by no nation: a few speculative men will take them, but none will be rendered more gloomy, more dissatisfied, or more unsocial by them. Rarely will you find one who, five minutes together, can fix his mind even on the surface: some new tune, some idle project, some light thought, some impracticable wish, will generally run, like the dazzling haze of summer on the dry heath, betwixt them and the reader. A bagpipe will swallow them up, a strathspey will dissipate them, or Romance with the death-rattle in her throat will drive them away unto dark staircases and charnelhouses.

You and I, in the course of our conversation, have been at variance, as much as discreet and honest men ought to be: each knows that the other thinks differently from him, yet each esteems the other. I cannot but smile when I reflect that a few paces, a glass of wine, a cup of tea, conciliate those whom Wisdom would keep asunder.

HOME.

No wonder you scoff emphatically as you pronounce the word *wisdom*.

HUME.

If men would permitt their minds, like their children, to associate freely together, if they could agree to meet one another with smiles and frankness, instead of suspicion and defiance, the common stock of wisdom and of happiness would be centupled. Probably those very two men who hate each other most, and whose best husbandry is to sow burs and thistles in each other's path, would, if they had ever met and conversed familiarly, have been ardent and inseparable friends. The minister who may order my book to be burnt tomorrow by the hangman, if I, by any accident, had been seated yesterday by his side at dinner, might perhaps in another fortnight recommend me to his master for a man of such gravity and wisdom as to be worthy of being a privy counsellor, and might conduct me to the treasury bench.

CONVERSATION XII.

PRINCE MAUROCORDATO

AND

GENERAL COLOCOTRONI.

PRINCE MAUROCORDATO

AND

GENERAL COLOCOTRONI.

MAUROCORDATO.

General, I have received from an Englishman, who resides at Florence, a military map of Greece in which all those places are accurately marked where great battles have been fought, and to which a topographical description is added, wherever it was to be found either in ancient historians or modern travellers.

COLOCOTRONI.

The ancients, who excell us in most things of importance, excell us principally in military science. Every great general was a great inventor. Within the memory of man, I believe, not a strategem has been thought of, by any one in Europe, be it old or new, original or borrowed. Campaigns are formed as much by a receit as custards, and sieges

as cheesecakes. I know the better part of Greece perfectly, and only wish your English friend could devise the means for me, of bringing my enemy where beaten enemies were brought formerly.

The Greeks have performed, in the last three years, as many arduous actions as their ancestors ever performed within the same period, and have shewn a constancy such as they have never exhibited since the days of Pericles. The British force is composed of three nations, each striving for preeminence in valour. Hence whenever a large body of troops is assembled, there must be a considerable portion of each, and vigour is exerted by all; but when smaller detachments of one nation are sent out on what they call diversions, we generally find them fail; there being no such spirit, or at best a very faint one, of rivalry and emulation. It cannot be dissembled that all the victories of the English, in the last fifty years, have been gained by the high courage and steddy discipline of the soldier; and the most remarkable, where the prudence and skill of the commander were altogether wanting. Place any distinguished general of theirs, where Murillo was placed in America, Mina in Spain, and then inform me what are your hopes, and whether you expect from him the same activity and the same expedients. What-

ever is done by the English, is done by open force, to which nothing is precursory or subsidiary. Our enemies the Turks are somewhat of this character. Now I lay it down as a maxim, that the weaker of two powers at variance should never employ the same weapons as the stronger: when it cannot find better, at least it should look for what are very different and very unexpected. If we Greeks ever form our regiments on the model of the English, we shall lose half our strength. By good fortune, our troops are composed of men united by blood or neighbourhood, and partly put into motion by the spirit of love and concord, partly by emulation; for the different regions of Greece, you know, are just as much rivals now as they were anciently. In no other part of Europe is there in the military establishment the least consideration of moral force: vices and virtues are equally compressed: men are filed and packeted like pins and needles, according to their length: an inch in stature divides two brothers, two friends, two rivals in the affections of the same mistress, leaving room for the union of the brave man and the coward. Nothing that is ridiculous, absurd, injurious, or offensive, is omitted in the modern practise: and if your English commentator draws his conclusions from it, and recommends it to our

imitation, we have only to thank him for his kind intention.

Greece has much to do, much not to do. God, who hath restored her miraculously to her enthusiastic and vigorous youth, will guide and protect her in it, and will open by degrees before her all the sources of knowledge, and all the means of improvement and prosperity.

MAUROCORDATO.

The paper I hold in my hand recommends the very thing on which you particularly insist, the diversity of weapon; nor does the author quote an English authority, but the authority of a far more illustrious character than any Englishman hath shewn himself within the recollection of the living, and who suggested it to his country, America, when she was about to contend with a military force, to which hers was disproportionate both in numbers and in discipline. The interest, says my correspondent, I feel and have always felt, in the fortune of those who struggle to be free, persuades me to submitt some reflections, perhaps not unimportant to your country. If they were entirely my own, adds he, I might hesitate more to offer them, although of late years I have studied these matters with some attention and have examined them with some industry. Franklin proposed to

the consideration of the Anglo-Americans, whether the bow be not a more effectual weapon than the musket. Its lightness, the ease with which it may be kept dry, with which it may be concealed and recovered, with which it may be laden and discharged, with which it may be preserved in order, or replaced, are not its only advantages.

Patriotic as are the Greeks, there are many who, on receiving a musket from the government, would be induced to return home, that they might rather employ it in the chase than in battle. The bow, at least in the beginning, would not serve the purpose, and would never hold forth such an inducement.

When ammunition is exhausted in the villages and in the mountains, where we fight most frequently, the soldier can find no more, and is no longer a soldier for some days; while every wood and thicket, every house and shed, produces the material of arrows.

Youths, from their tender age or from their idle habits, incapable of carrying heavy arms, would carry a bow, it being no impediment either in attack or flight, and, being thrown away, it is little loss to them, and no advantage to the enemy.

The advice of Franklin was not rejected because it was irrational or reprehensible, but because the

Anglo-Americans were nearly all well exercised in the management of fire-arms, and because they found in the cities a superabundance of ammunition. It is not so in Greece; the choice is yet to be made, and you will surely make it, says our friend, of that material, which is at once the most plentiful and the most easy to work, that in which the exercise is the least laborious, and the attainment of skill the least difficult.

Suppose two kinds of arms, or, if you please, two kinds of tactics, equally good: if either of these be unexpected by the enemy, that is preferable. Even the worse, and considerably so, the first time it is practised, will give the advantage to those who employ it, unless its defects be too evident.

The ancients, he thinks with you, reasoned much more and much better on this business than the moderns, and they always used a great diversity of weapons in the same army, the advantage of which is demonstrated by Folard in his commentary on Polybius.

The arrow acts in three manners; rectilinearly, curvilinearly, and perpendicularly; the musket-ball in one only, the rectilinear.

Twelve arrows are discharged before the musket can be discharged the third time, even supposing

that it is always clean, and that it never misses fire.

The musket without bayonet, as are many of ours, is very inconvenient; for we must often draw the sword, and then what becomes of it? while the bow, thrown in a moment across the shoulder, leaves the right-hand at liberty, and the body unencumbered, for all the other ways of defence or of attack.

The Turks fight in close array; so that every arrow strikes either man or horse; and it is remarkable that a moderate puncture makes the horse intractable, while to a severe musket-shot he often seems for a time insensible.

The report of fire-arms by night or in ambuscade betrays the soldier; the arrow not. Even by day it sometimes is expedient that Death come veiled.

The lock of fire-arms is the most important part of them, and is the most liable to injury, from a blow, from a fall, or from service. The musket is composed of many parts, all subject to be detached or loosened, some to be lost, as the rod and the flint, and the loss may not be perceived until it is fatal.

If any considerable body of archers, well sup-

ported, drew upon an unprepared enemy, (and all at this day are so) they would gain, if not the battle, the advantage. No fire could produce such destruction, such confusion, or leave effects so immediately visible, so generally appalling.

He who carries a bow instead of a musket, may also carry provisions for five entire days; an incalculable advantage in a country laid waste on all sides, and which will enable him, in most situations, to choose and change his encampment as he pleases. When a foot soldier thus armed has taken the horse of an enemy, he may mount and use him, should circumstances require it, which he could not do with musket and bayonet, even in case of necessity.

The bow has no need of cleaning; the musket has need of it every day; and after a march or an engagement, when it may want it most, the soldier feels little inclination to this surcharge of labour, and often has not tow, sometimes not water, as ours experienced on the mountains very frequently last summer, when even in the plains occasionally there was barely a sufficiency to quench their thirst.

By the lightness of this weapon, and the little danger there is of its sounding loud by striking

against any thing, ammunition-waggons and stores may be set on fire, applying to the arrow inflammable substances.

The Turks are still masters of cities and fortresses which we must take. No nation defends a place so obstinately and courageously as they do. Here the bow is greatly a better weapon than the musket: for in the hurry of firing on those who mount to the assault, few balls are perfectly well rammed; hence they fall out or fall inoffensively: and nothing is more difficult than to hit a man, aiming at him perpendicularly. The arrow on this occasion would seldom miss.

COLOCOTRONI.

These observations are worth attention. What have you besides?

MAUROCORDATO.

The observations on defensive armour are original and important. Even so late as the reign of Louis XIV the officer wore it. In the battle of Waterloo, more glorious to the victor than any since that of Leuctra, (if perhaps you except two others won in distant times by the same nation, at Poictiers and at Blenheim) three regiments of light cavalry in succession were ordered to attack the French cuirassiers. Each made several charges, and lost the greater part of its men, in killed or

wounded. This, continues my author, belongs to history, and shall find its place there, together with the enquiries and reflections it excites...an imprudence unexampled! If, adds he, these English regiments had been defended by the armour I am about to propose for yours, they would have lost much fewer, and, although no troops are braver, more expert, or better disciplined, than the French cuirassiers, would probably have repulsed them: for the English horses were fresher, not having surmounted such acclivities, nor having toiled so long over a deep and tenacious clay.

Suppose it possible to discover a substance on which the seasons have little or no effect; which resists heat, cold, moisture...iron does not.

Suppose it possible to discover a substance which leaves every limb its elasticity, its full play and action...iron does not.

Suppose it possible to discover a substance in which the soldier, if necessary, may sleep...in iron he cannot.

In fact, general, he recommends the use of *cork* armour; the usual thickness of which material is sufficient to resist the bayonet, and which a musket-ball will rarely penetrate. By employing this, the soldier who cannot swim has all the advantages of him who can: he may be knocked

down in it, but he will not be killed nor badly wounded: seldom will a particle of it enter the flesh, and in case it should, no substance whatever is so easily extracted or so perfectly, nor will there ever be those contusions which are often mortal in the head: for although the sabre does not penetrate the metal helmet, it indents it so deeply as to produce the same effect. We have experienced the dizziness that the helmet occasions in a few hours of exertion: this destroys both activity and strength. Nothing is so cool to the head as cork, or presents so equal and wholesome a temperature in all seasons. Its additional weight is imperceptible to the horse, nor is the dismounted soldier lost, as the steel-cased cuirassier is. This armour is cheap and durable; it occupies no time in cleaning, no time in putting on: every one can mend or replace it.

Some other of the projects must be left to the discretion of our Government: they are political rather than military; they are calculated to act instantaneously and effectually. The author himself says on them, "There are circumstances in which Themistocles should be heard before Aristides, and indeed without him."

He recommends that the Acro-corinthos, and some other positions, should be flanked with strong

Martello towers, and gives an account of an English ship of seventy-four guns, utterly ruined off Corsica by such a tower, mounting one only. Here is also a proposal to construct, or rather to employ, for we have them in all our ports, gunboats similar to those used by the Russians in the battle of Tchesme.

COLOCOTRONI.

I hope we are not yet reduced to imitate the Russians in any thing. The least inventive of all the human races, and the most hostile to all inventions, can hardly be presented to Greeks for a model, by one who appears well acquainted with our history, with our capacities, and with our wants.

MAUROCORDATO.

He informs me that the invention of this is due to his countryman and friend, General Bentham, a man equally distinguished for courage, humanity, and science, and whose brother I have heard represented as the only true philosopher of his nation since Locke.

COLOCOTRONI.

Prince, I know almost as little of philosophy or philosophers, as the emperor of Turkey, or Morocco, or Austria. War is my pursuit: come to the point; let me see his project. I may recom-

mend it: for the wisest men and most useful things want recommendation; and the tongue of the fool is often requisite to the inventions of the wise.

MAUROCORDATO.

General Bentham commanded the naval armament of Russia at the battle of Tchesme, under (in politics this word usually means *over*) prince Potemkin. Gunboats had always been built solidly, with strong traverses, to prevent the recoil of the gun. Hence, after every fire, the motion of the vessel was so violent and of so long continuance, that the discharges were intermitted and uncertain. One would imagine that very little experience was requisite to demonstrate how, leaving the cannon to its recoil, and the vessel to its own action upon the water, no violent shock could be given, and how the succeeding discharges would be more rapid and more easily directed. Instead of the old gunboat, constructed at much expense and soon ruined, he placed heavy cannon upon barks deemed before incapable of bearing them: but it was soon apparent that on still water, they were adequate to destroy the most formidable ships of the line. The general shewed the troops and mariners, that the water itself gives the proper degree both of recession and of resistence, without danger to the can-

noneer or detriment to the boat. The advantages of the invention are these. The boats, if they are to be built, do not cost a fifth of the others: that worse timber and a smaller quantity of it will serve: that all, even the lightest, may be adapted in little time: that merchant-ships taken from the enemy may be converted into them.

COLOCOTRONI.

Do the English use them constantly? for in these matters they have more authority with me than in others.

MAUROCORDATO.

They do not: because they have no need of gunboats on their coasts, commanding, as they do, the ocean: because too their seas are tempestuous, and their expeditions for the greater part distant: and because they are reluctant that their enemies should acquire from them the benefit of an invention, by which they themselves could not profit in the same degree. The small gunboat not presenting its side to an enemy, the Turk, the worst of cannoneers, would hardly ever strike it; while it would rarely miss him, and would never fail to discourage where it might not disable.

My correspondent is particularly urgent that every mariner and soldier on board should be armed with a bow, and with a longer and heavier pike

than any in common use. Recurring to actions by land, he observes that the length of the pike gave the victory to the Greeks in the first battle against Xerxes, when the *Immortals* of that autocrat were repulsed by the Lacedemonians, according to Herodotus, from this cause only. The bow is recommended at sea still more earnestly, and in our gunboats and small vessels most particularly, from the necessity of loading them lightly with ammunition.

COLOCOTRONI.

Should any of these suggestions be introduced, it must be done suddenly, secretly, and diffusively.

MAUROCORDATO.

The political reflections of my correspondent will be the subject of some future consideration. To obtain our independence, he would propose to the Turk the same annual subsidy *as comes into the treasury at present*, which is little more than a fifth of what is levied: he would engage that we should admitt into our ports no vessel of a potentate at war with Turkey, and that we should sign no treaty of alliance with any one upon her confines: he would consent that all the Greeks in Asia and other parts should be united in the territory bounded on the north by Olympus and the Ceraunians, on the East by the Egean sea, and in-

cluding Crete. Property should be exchanged by Turkish and Greek commissioners, aided by the consuls of France, England, and Sweden, and the contract should be terminated in three years in all parts of both countries.

He informs me that many Christian and Jewish families have still the records of places in Crete, where the treasures of private houses, as also of churches and of convents, were deposited on its subjugation. Turkey does not derive one hundred and eighty thousand zecchins annually from the conquest. She would readily compromise in a few years, probably on the breaking out of the first war, for the tax stipulated, and accept ten or twelve years purchase. Indeed on her expressing any doubt of security in our faith, we might offer as much, with no fear of refusal, and could obtain it from England. So moderate a debt would rather be a bond to unite us than a burden.

COLOCOTRONI.

A society of Englishmen, no less patriotic, has kindly sent to me three hundred bibles, in readiness for the next campaign; with an exhortation to prohibit all dancing in private houses, unless among persons of a certain age and rank; a remonstrance against the letting of urine at the corners of streets, or lanes, or stable doors;

and a form of prayer to be offered up in our churches.

MAUROCORDATO.

Instead of this latter, our patriarch may be requested to insert in the Litany a petition to the Almighty, that, in the bowels of his compassion, it may please him to retain in the government of the *Seven Isles* his Excellency Sir Thomas Maitland, so that the people shall never cease to sigh for union with us; and that likewise, in his infinite mercy, he may remove all impediment to his Excellency, by removing for ever Lord Guildford, in whose presence Learning would almost forget her losses, and dismembered Greece her sufferings.

COLOCOTRONI.

Greece, whatever arms she takes up, may look forward to years of agony, and to more enemies than the Turk. All the old governments in Europe will attempt to increase our difficulties, and, when they have augmented them to the utmost in their power, will point them out as the natural fruits of insubordination, for such they call resistence, which is the more criminal in their eyes the longer and the more patiently you have borne oppression. Happily we have no allie: we have an oppressor the less. If

Spain or Portugal had any, that allie would model the adopted form of government; in other words, would change the features without diminishing the weight of slavery. Providence, I trust, will favour our exertions: I would propose then to leave a wide space between us, and the dominions of a government more systematically and more degradingly tyrannical. Indignant as we justly are at the unworthy treatment we have received, and conscious, as we cannot but be, that we are the undegenerate descendents of a people, which never since the foundation of the world hath beheld a rival in glory, we must acknowledge that no conqueror is milder than the Turkish, no religion more tolerant, no judge more dispassionate, no law more equitable. But many countries, once Grecian, lie desolate: Crete can hardly discover the traces of five amidst her hundred cities. True; islands, which when free are the happiest of countries, are the most miserable when they are subjected. For the subjection endured under modern governments, is far different in its effects from that endured under our ancestors and the Romans. Towns, harbours, and marts, arose upon it: be my witnesses on one side, Cyprus, Lesbos, Chios, and ye starry host of Cyclades! stand on the other, Sicily, Sardinia, Ireland, with

your herds of mendicants, your bands of robbers, your pestiferous marshes, and your deserted ports. What countries are naturally more fertile? what more wretched? Wild theories have not rendered them so; and yet the only mischiefs to be extirpated are wild theories. The cities of the Valtelline, under the protection of Switzerland, Ragusa, Genoa, Venice, had enjoyed a long prosperity, all several hundred, some past a thousand years, and one had arrived, by its prudence and wisdom, at an age which appeared forbidden to human institutions, when suddenly a sage, too autocratical to be taught any thing by sages of another class, draws around his shoulders a cat-skin hung with saints, and is informed, as he swallows his morning draught of brandy, that if they really were happy, they were happy from wild theories, and must be all corrected. Tyranny alone has rights; usurpation alone has privileges. "*You* shall enchain Poland; *you* shall do with Italy and with Illyria what you please; *you* shall dismember free and happy Saxony." "What! no more? my brothers!" "Wait a little, our brother, wait a little! Wait, our brother, four years at farthest: then advance: you will be hailed as a deliverer from within and from without.

"His most christian Majesty is anxious to re-

cover the influence of his family in Spain: the English, who waged war to prevent it from having any, are not in a condition to interpose the slightest impediment, and the ministers are more interested in suppressing what are called constitutions, than in maintaining the dignity of their throne."

Thus argue the holy Allies.

England is indeed the only country in the world where the ministers are chosen from their dissimilitude to the people. I never think of them without the idea of the bear ridden by the monkey; the strong by the weak, the grave by the pert, the quiet by the mischievous. Since the time of Pitt the First (in this manner will politicians teach historians to write) she has been governed, with hardly an interval, by the most inordinate and desperate gamesters that ever her *subscription-houses* drove pennyless down stairs.

MAUROCORDATO.

There is an axiom, that the best if corrupted is the worst. It grieves me to think of England, once the favorite of Liberty, and sitting in light alone. All the French, however, cannot have lost entirely that spirit with which twenty millions were animated so lately. His most christian Majesty is said in the chamber of deputies to be *destined by Providence to close the abyss of re-*

volutions. He may perhaps close that abyss (as he would any other) by falling into it.

COLOCOTRONI.

To rise against oppression; to teach our children their duties and their rights; to remind them of their ancestors, and to rescue them from the seraglio, these are crimes! They are crimes, in the eyes of whom? of those who profess the religion of Christ! holy men! sacred allies! apostolic! catholic! We, Maurocordato, are inconsiderate, rash, frantic; for what gain we by our vigils, fasts, and toils; by our roofless houses, our devastated farms, our long marches, our broken sleep upon the snowy mountains, unless it be the approbation of our fathers now in bliss, and the consolatory hope of it from our posterity? The rest of Europe is reduced to slavery, one heroic race excepted: God alone can foresee the termination of our conflict; but of this we both are certain; that, whenever we fall, in whatever part of Greece our bodies lie, they will lie by the side of those who have defended the same cause; and that there is not a pillar, in ancient days erected by a grateful country, that does not in its fragments tell our story.

The emperor of Russia has had the address, by the congress of Verona, to involve the states of Europe in war again. He will within a year or two be able to put into execution his project on the side of Turkey, having first enfeebled Persia, by pushing her forward so precipitately. I foresaw and foretold all this. In the animal world the insects have the largest empire, in the political the Russians. The dominions of the czar extend over a space equal to a third of the old world, the parent of so many vast empires, uncounted tribes, and unknown generations, and are seven times larger than the nearest planet, including in the calculation all its gulphs and oceans. His subjects are educated in blind submission to his will; and at least two millions of them either are soldiers, or may become so without any loss to agriculture and the other arts. Is there then no danger to Europe from so enormous a power, put into motion and directed by ministers who have been raised from obscurity and want, who have abjured their country, and who must flourish on the decomposition of others? How large a portion of North-America has been publickly claimed by the autocrat, the dominions of Spain, of England, and of the United-States, from the thirty-first to the sixtieth degree! enough to constitute three great empires.

No nation seems yet to have divined the importance of California: the Russians are destined to teach it... The wisest work on political relations is that of my old acquaintance the late Governor Pownal... too wise ever to be adopted by our government, even if no impediments had been thrown in the way since it was written.

* * * *

The notes I intended for this Conversation were numerous; but as they contained some particulars which I think it imprudent to divulge at present, I shall insert some verses in their place, not very remote from the subject.

TO CORINTH.

Queen of the double sea, beloved of him
Who shakes the world's foundations, thou hast seen

Glory in all her beauty, all her forms;
Seen her walk back with Theseus when he left
The bones of Sciron bleaching to the wind,
Above the ocean's roar and cormorant's flight,
So high that vastest billows from above
Shew but like herbage waving in the mead;
Seen generations throng thine Isthmian games,
And pass away...the beautiful, the brave,
And them who sang their praises.

But, O Queen,
Audible still (and far beyond thy cliffs)
As when they first were uttered, are those words
Divine which praised the valiant and the just,
And tears have often stopt, upon that ridge
So perilous, him who brought before his eye
The Colchian babes.

"Stay! spare him! save the last!
Medea!...is that blood? again! it drops
From my imploring hand upon my feet...
I will invoke the Eumenides no more,
I will forgive thee, bless thee, bend to thee
In all thy wishes...do but thou, Medea,
Tell me, one lives."

"And shall I too deceive?"
Cries from the fiery car an angry voice;
And swifter than two falling stars descend
Two breathless bodies: warm, soft, motionless,
As flowers in stillest noon before the sun,
They lie three paces from him: such they lie
As when he left them sleeping side by side,
A mother's arm round each, a mother's cheeks
Between them, flushed with happiness and love.
He was more changed than they were...doomed to shew
Thee and the stranger, how defaced and scarred
Grief hunts us down the precipice of years,
And whom the faithless prey upon the last.

To give the inertest masses of our Earth
Her loveliest forms was thine, to fix the Gods
Within thy walls, and hang their tripods round
With fruits and foliage knowing not decay.
A nobler work remains: thy citadel
Invites all Greece: o'er lands and floods remote
Many are the hearts that still beat high for thee:
Confide then in thy strength, and unappalled
Look down upon the plain, while yokemate kings
Run bellowing, where their herdsmen goad them on:
Instinct is sharp in them and terror true,
They smell the floor whereon their necks must lie.

CONVERSATION XIII.

ALFIERI

AND

SALOMON, THE FLORENTINE JEW.

ALFIERI

AND

SALOMON, THE FLORENTINE JEW.

ALFIERI.

Let us walk to the window, Signor Salomon... and now, instead of the silly simpering compliments repeated at introductions, let me assure you that you are the only man in Florence with whom I would willingly exchange a salutation.

SALOMON.

I must think myself highly flattered, Signor Conte, having always heard that you are not only the greatest democrat, but also the greatest aristocrat, in Europe.

ALFIERI.

These two things, however opposite, as your smile would indicate, are not so irreconcilable as you imagine. I see no aristocracy in the children of sharpers from behind the counter, nor, placing

the matter in the most favorable point of view, in the descendents of free citizens, who accepted from any vile enslaver, French, Spanish, German, priest or monk, with a honeycomb on his head and a key at his girdle, the titles of counts and marquisses. In Piedemont the matter is different: we must either have been the rabble or their lords: we were military; and we retain over the populace the same rank and spirit as our ancestors held over the soldiery.

SALOMON.

Signor Conte, I have heard of levelers, but I have never seen one: all are disposed to level down, but nobody to level up. As for nobility, there is none in Europe, beside the Venetian. Nobility must be self-constituted and independent: the free alone are noble; slavery, like death, levels all. The English come nearest to the Venetian: they are independent, but want the main characteristic, the *self-constituted.* You have been in England, Signor Conte, and can judge of them better than I can.

ALFIERI.

England, as you know, is governed by Pitt, the most insidious of her republicans, and the most hostile to aristocracy. Jealous of power, and distrustful of the people that raised him to it, he

enriches and attaches to him the commercial part of the nation, by the most wasteful prodigality both in finance and war, and he loosens from the landed all the leading proprietors, by raising them to the peerage. Nearly a third of the lords have been created by him, and shew themselves devotedly his creatures*. Pitt possesses not the advantage possest by insects, which, if they see but one inch before them, see that inch distinctly. He knows not that the machine which at present runs on so briskly, will fall to pieces the moment it stops. He will indeed carry his point in debasing the aristocracy, but he will equally debase the people. Undivided power he will continue to enjoy; but, after his death, none will be able to say from any visible proof or appearance, *how glorious a people did he govern!* He will have changed its character in all ranks and conditions. After this it is little to say that he will have exalted its rival, who, without his interposition, would have sunk

* All this refers to a state of things belonging to history, but past away from us; it being evident that nothing can be more respectable than the present English nobility. Alfieri spoke scornfully and disdainfully; because he was generally ill received in England; for although he was at that time the greatest man in Europe, he was not acknowledged or known to be so.

under distress and crime. But interposition was necessary to his aggrandisement, enabling him to distribute in twenty years, if he should live so long, more wealth among his friends and partisans, than has been squandered by the uncontrolled profusion of French monarchs, from the first Louis to the last.

SALOMON.

How happens it that England, richer and more powerful than all other states, should still contain fewer nobles?

ALFIERI.

The greater part of the English nobility has neither power nor title. Even those who are noble both de jure and de facto, the hereditary lords of manors with large estates attached to them, claim no titles, at home or abroad. Hence in all foren countries the true English gentleman is placed below his rank, which naturally and necessarily is far higher than that of your slipshod counts and lottery-office marquisses, whose gamekeepers with their high plumes, cocked hats, and hilts of rapiers, have no other occupation than to stand behind the carriage, if the rotten plank will bear them; whose game is the wren and the redbreast, and whose beat is across the market.

Father Menestrier, who, both as a Frenchman and as a jesuit, speaks very contemptuously of English nobility, admits the gentlemen to this dignity. Their property, their information, their political influence, and their moral character, place them beyond measure above the titularies of this country, be the rank what it may; and it is a remarkable proof of moderation in some, and of contemptuousness in others, that they do not openly claim from their king, or assume without any such intervention, the titles arising from landed wealth, which conciliate the attention and civility of all classes, and indeed of all individuals, abroad.

It is among those who stand between the peerage and the people, that there exists a greater mass of virtue and of wisdom than all the rest of the universe contains. Much of their dignified simplicity may be attributed to the plainness of their religion, and, what will always be imitated, to the decorous virtue of their king; for whatever may be the defects of either, if we compare them with others round us, they are excellent.

SALOMON.

A young religion jumps upon the shoulders of an older one, and soon becomes like her, by

mockery of her tricks, her cant, and her decrepitude. Meanwhile the old one shakes with indignation, and swears there is neither relationship nor likeness. Was there ever a religion in the world that was not the true religion, or was there ever a king that was not the best of kings?

ALFIERI.

In the latter case we must have arrived very nigh to perfection; since it is evident from the authority of the gravest men, theologians, presidents, judges, corporations, universities, senates, that every prince is still better than his father, *of blessed memory now with God.* If they continue to rise thus transcendently, earth in a little time will be incapable of holding them, and higher heavens must be raised upon the highest heavens for their reception. The lumber of our Italian courts, the most crazy part of which is that which rests upon a red cushion in a gilt chair, with stars and sheep and crosses dangling from it, must be approached as Artaxerxes and Domitian. These automatons, we are told, nevertheless, are very condescending. Poor fools who tell us it! ignorant that where on one side is condescension, on the other side must be baseness. The rascals have

ruined my physiognomy. I wear an habitual sneer upon my face, God confound them for it! even when I whisper a word of love in the prone ear of my *donna**.

SALOMON.

This temper or constitution of mind I am afraid may do injury to your works.

ALFIERI.

Surely not to all: my satire at least must be the better for it.

SALOMON.

I think differently. No satire can be excellent where displeasure is expressed with acrimony and vehemence. When satire ceases to smile it should be momentarily, and for the purpose of inculcating a moral. Juvenal is hardly more a satirist than Lucan: he is indeed a vigorous and bold declaimer, but he stamps too often, and splashes up too much filth. We Italians have no delicacy in wit, we have indeed no conception of it; we fancy we must be weak if we are not offensive. The scream of Pulcinello is imitated more easily, than the masterly strokes of Plautus, or the sly insinuations of Catullus and of Flaccus.

* She who was the *donna* of Alfieri is now the *donna* of a French picture-dealer, a maker and vender of Poussins.

ALFIERI.

We are the least witty of men because we are the most trifling.

SALOMON.

You would persuade me then that to be witty one must be grave: this is surely a contradiction.

ALFIERI.

I would persuade you only, that banter, pun, and quibble, are the properties of light men and shallow capacities; that genuine humour and true wit require a sound and capacious mind; which is always a grave one. Contemptuousness is not incompatible with them; worthless is that man who feels no contempt for the worthless, and weak who treats their emptiness as a thing of weight. At first it may seem a paradox, but it is perfectly true, that the gravest nations have been the wittiest; and in those nations some of the gravest men: in England Swift and Addison, in Spain Cervantes. Rabelais and La Fontaine are recorded by their countrymen to have been *reveurs*.

SALOMON.

It is indeed a remarkable thing that such should be the case among the moderns: it does not appear to have been so among the ancients.

ALFIERI.

I differ from you, M. Salomon. When we turn toward the Athenians, we find many comic writers but few facetious. Menander, if we may judge from his fragments, had less humour than Socrates, and Aristophanes himself than Phocion. Among the Romans, the gravest of nations after the English, I think Cicero* and Catullus were the wittiest. The former, from his habits of life and studies, must have been grave; and the latter we may believe to have been so, from his being tender and impassioned in the more serious part of his poetry.

SALOMON.

This to me is no proof; for the most tender and impassioned of all poets is Shakespear, who certainly was himself far removed from gravity, however much of it he imparted to some personages of his drama.

ALFIERI.

That Shakespear was gay and pleasurable in

* Quintilian says of Demosthenes, non displicuisse illi jocos, sed non contigisse. In this he was much less fortunate than Phocion and Cicero. Facility in making men smile occasionally gives a natural air to a great orator, and adds thereby much effect to what he says, provided it come discreetly. It is in him somewhat like affability in a prince; excellent, if used with caution. Every one must have perceived how frequently those are brought over by a touch of humour, who have resisted the force of argument and entreaty.

conversation I can easily admitt, for there never was a mind at once so plastic and so pliant; but, without much gravity, could there have been that potency and comprehensiveness of thought, that depth of feeling, that creation of imperishable ideas, that sojourn in the souls of other men? He was amused in his workshop; such was society; but when he left it, he meditated most intensely upon those limbs and muscles on which he was about to bestow new action, grace, and majesty; and so great an intensity of meditation must have strongly impressed his whole character.

SALOMON.

I imagine it to have been an Englishman who composed on the Florentines the lines I am about to repeat; I heard them from one; and they tend to illustrate the peculiar humour of that nation.

> Giunto in Firenze, ammirava un Inglese
> Nè campanil nè duomo nè tribuna
> Di Venere, che intorno a se raduna
> Le grazie di ogni secolo e paese,
> Non la Sabina e il rapitor feroce,
> Palazzo Vecchio nè Palazzo Pitti,...
> Il popolo ammirava,... e, ad alta voce,
> Ma! come queste merde stanno dritte.

You will however allow that we have no proof of gravity in Horace or Plautus.

ALFIERI.

On the contrary I think we have many. Horace,

like all the pusillanimous, was malignant: like all courtiers, he yielded to the temper of his masters. His lighter touches were agreeable less to his own nature than to the nature of Augustus and Mecenas, both of them fond of trifling; but in his Odes and his Discourses there is more of gravity than of gaiety. That he was libidinous is no proof that he was playful; for often such men are even melancholic.

Plautus, who appears to me to have been by far the first of comic writers, rich in language, rich in reflection, rich in character, rich in humour, is oftener grave than could have suited the inclinations of a coarse and tumultuous populace. What but the strong bent of his nature could have moved him to it?

SALOMON.

The French are witty.

ALFIERI.

This I concede to them; and no person will accuse me of partiality in their favour. They are witty; and when they discover a witty thing, they value it so highly, that they reserve it for the noblest purposes, such as tragedies, sermons, and funeral orations. Whenever a king of theirs is inaugurated at Rheims, a string of witty things is

prepared for him during his whole reign, regularly as the civil list; regularly as menageries, oratories, orangeries, wife, confessor, waterworks, fireworks, gardens, parks, forests, and chases. Sometimes one is put into his mouth when he is too empty, sometimes when he is too full; but he always hath his due portion, take it when or how he may. A decent one, somewhat less indeed than that of their sovran, is reserved for the princes of the blood; the greater part of which is usually packed up with their camp-equipage; and I have seen a label to a *bon mot*, on which was written, *Brillant comme la reponse de Henri IV, quand...*

We Italians sometimes fall into what, if you will not call them witticisms, you may call the plasma of witticisms, upon their ground, by mere mistake, and against our genius. Reading in a gazette, *Hier le roi a travaillé avec ses ministres,* and knowing the man's character, a young courtier cried innocently, " What! his Most Christian Majesty condescends to dine with his subjects! and they joke upon it!" In another, *Les enfans de France se promenent en carosse &c.*, his sister enquired of her confessor how many there were of them: he answered " Twentyfour or twentyfive millions." A blunder, by its very stumbling, is

often carried a little beyond the plain sense that was aimed at, and falls upon something which, if it be not wit, is invested with its qualities and powers.

SALOMON.

I have had occasion to observe the obtuseness of the Tuscans in particular on these matters. Lately I lent my Moliere to a man of talents, and when he returned the volumes, I asked him how he liked them: *Per Bacco*, he exclaimed, *the names are very comical, Sganarelli, and those others*. They who have no wit of their own, are ignorant of it when it occurs, mistake it, and misapply it. A sailor found upon the shore a piece of amber, too large to be put into his jacket. He carried it home under his arm, and, as he was fond of fiddling, began to rubb it across the strings of his violin. It would not serve. He then broke some pieces off, boiled them in blacking, and found to his surprise and disquiet that it gave no fresh lustre to the shoe. *What are you about?* cried a messmate...*smell it man; it is amber. The devil take it*, cried the finder, *I fancied it was rosin*, and he threw it into the sea. We despise what we cannot use.

ALFIERI.

Your observations on Italian wit are correct.

Even our comedies are declamatory: long speeches and inverted sentences overlay and stifle the elasticity of humour. The great Machiavelli is, whatever M. de Voltaire may assert to the contrary, a coarse comedian; hardly better than the cardinal Bibiena, poisoned by the Holiness of our Lord, pope Leo, for wearying him with wit *.

* If Cardinal Bibiena was poisoned by Leo, an opinion to which the profligacy of the pope gave rise, and the malignity of men reception, it should be recorded in justice to his Holiness that he wished to protect the family. I find among the letters of Bembo a very beautiful and energetic one, written in the name of Leo to Francis I. There is something not unsuspicious in the mode of expression. He repeats that, although Bibiena thinks himself sure of dying, *there appears to be no immediate danger ... if it should happen*, &c. I collect below the similar expressions.

Cum Bernardus Bibiena cardinalis aliquot jam dies ex *stomacho* laboret, *magisque timore quodam suo quam morbi vi urgente,* brevi se existimet moriturum... Quanquam enim nihildum sanè video, quo quidem de illius vitâ sit omnino magnopere timendum ... Yet he goes on rather less securely... Si id accidat quod ipse *suspicatur,* tua in illum munificentia tuumque præclarum munus non statim neque unà cum ipsius vitâ extinguatur, præsertim cum ei tam breve temporis spatium illo ipso tuo munere frui licuerit, ut ante amissum videri possit quam quale quantumve fuerit percipi ab illo cognoscive potuerit... Ut ipse, si moriendum ei sit, &c.

The Italians are too credulous on poison, which at one period was almost a natural death amongst them. Englishmen were shocked at the confidence with which they asserted

SALOMON.

His Holiness took afterwards a stirrup-cup of the same brewery, and never had committed the same offence, poor man!

it of two personages, who occupied in the world a rank and interest due to neither, and one of whom died in England, the other in her dependencies.

The last words of the letter make me an unbeliever of Leo's guilt in this business. What exquisite language! what expressions of zeal and sincerity!

Quæ quidem omnia non tam propterea colligo, quod non illud unum existimem apud te plurimum valiturum, amorem scilicet erga illum tuum, itemque incredibilem ipsius in te cultum, quod initio dixi, sed ut mihi ipse, qui id magnopere cupio, satisfaciam; ne perfamiliari ac pernecessario meo, mihique charissimo, ac suavissimo atque in omni vitæ munere probatissimo, mea benevolentia meusque amor hoc extremo ejus vitæ tempore, si hoc extremum erit, plane defuisse videatur.

In the tenth book of these epistles there is one addressed to the cardinal, by which the church of Loretto is placed under his care, with every mark of friendship and partiality.

De tuâ enim in Divam pietate, in rem Romanam studio, in me autem, cui quidem familiæque meæ omnia pæne usque a puero summæ cum integritatis et fidei, tum vero curæ atque diligentiæ egregia atque præclara officia præstitisti, perveteri observantiâ voluntateque admonitus, nihil est rerum omnium quod tibi recte mandari crediqque posse non existimem.

It is not in human nature, I think, that a man ever capable of these feelings towards any one, should poison him afterwards, when no powerful interest or deep revenge was to be gratified: the opinion nevertheless has prevailed; and I attribute it to a person not altogether free from malignity, a scorner of popes and princes, and especially hostile to the Medicean family.

ALFIERI.

Indignation and contempt may be expressed in other poems than such as are usually called satires. Filicaia, in his celebrated address to Italy, steers a middle course.

SALOMON.

True, he is neither indignant nor contemptuous: but the verses of Michel-Angelo would serve rather for an example, added to which they are much better.

ALFIERI.

In fact the former part of Filicaia's is verbose and confused: let us analyse them.

> Italia, Italia, o tu cui die' la sorte
> *Dono* infelice di bellezza, onde hai
> Funesta dote d' infiniti guai,
> Che in fronte scritti *per gran doglia* porti.

Fate gives the *gift*, and this gift gives the dowery, which dowery consists of infinite *griefs*, and these griefs Italy carries written on her brow, through great *sorrow!*

> Deh, fosti tu *men* bella o *almen* più forte!

Men and *almen* sound wretchedly: he might have written *oppur*. There are those who would persuade us that verbal criticism is unfair, and that few poems can stand it. The truth of the

latter assertion by no means establishes the former: all good criticism hath its foundation on verbal. Long dissertations are often denominated criticisms, without one analysis; instead of which it is thought enough to say; "*There is nothing finer in our language...we can safely recommend... imbued with the true spirit...destined to immortality,*" &c.

A perfect piece of criticism must shew *where* a work is good, or bad; *why* it is good, or bad; in what degree it is good, or bad; must also shew in what manner and to what extent the same ideas or reflections have come to others, and, if they be cloathed in poetry, why, by an apparently slight variation, what in one author is mediocrity, in another is excellence. I have never seen a critic, I do not say of Florence or of Pisa, but of Milan or Bologna, where letters are cultivated with more assiduity and success, who did not commend and admire the sonnet of Cassiani on the rape of Proserpine, without a suspicion of its manifold and grave defects. Few sonnets are indeed so good; but if we examine it attentively, we shall discover its flaws and patches.

> Die' un alto strido, gittò i fiori, e volta
> All' improvisa *mano* che la *cinse,*
> Tutta in se *per la tema onde fû colta*
> La Siciliana vergine si strinse.

The *hand* is inadequate to embrace a body: *strinse*, which comes after, would have done better. The two last verses tell only what the two first had told; and feebly; nothing can be more so than the *tema onde fù colta*.

> Il nero dio la calda bocca involta
> D'ispido pelo a ingordo bacciò spinse,
> E di stigia fuligin con la folta
> Barba l'eburnea gola *e il sen le tinse.*

Does this describe the brother of Jupiter? does it not rather the devils of our carneval, than him at whose side, upon asphodel and amaranth, the sweet Persephone sits pensively contented, in that deep motionless quiet, which mortals pity and which the Gods enjoy; than him who, under the umbrage of Elysium, gazes at once upon all the beauties that on earth were separated by times and countries.. Helena and Eriphyle, Polyxena and Hermione, Deidamia and Deianira, Leda and Omphale, Atalanta and Cydippe, Laodamia, with her arm around the neck of a fond youth, whom she still seems afraid of losing, and apart, the daughters of Niobe, though now in smiles, still clinging to their parent; and many thousands more, each of whom is worth the dominions, once envied, of both brothers?

SALOMON.

These images are better than satires; but continue, in preference to all other thoughts or pursuits, the noble career you have entered. Be contented, Signor Conte, with the glory of our first great dramatist, and neglect altogether any inferior one. Why vex and torment yourself about the French? They buzz and are troublesome while they are swarming; but the master will soon hive them. Is the whole nation worth the worst of your tragedies? All the present race of them, all the creatures in the world which excite your indignation, will lie in the grave, while young and old are clapping their hands or beating their bosoms at your *Bruto Primo*. Consider, to make one step further, that kings and emperors should in your estimation be but as grasshoppers and beetles: let them consume a few blades of your clover, without molesting them, without bringing them to crawl on you and claw you. The difference between them and men of genius, is almost as great as between men of genius and those higher Intelligences who act in immediate subordination to the Almighty. Yes, I assert it, without flattery and without fear, the Angels are not higher above mortals, than you are above the proudest that trample on them.

ALFIERI.

I believe, sir, you were the first in commending my tragedies.

SALOMON.

He who first praises a good book becomingly is next in merit to the author.

ALFIERI.

As a writer and as a man I know my station: if I found in the world five equal to myself, I would walk out of it, not to be jostled.

I must now, Signor Salomon, take my leave of you; for his Eminence my coachman and their Excellencies my horses are waiting.

CONVERSATION XIV.

LOPEZ BAÑOS

AND

ROMERO ALPUENTE.

LOPEZ BAÑOS

AND

ROMERO ALPUENTE.

BAÑOS.

At length, Alpuente, the saints of the holy alliance have declared war against us.

ALPUENTE.

I have not heard it until now.

BAÑOS.

They have directed a memorial to the King of France, inviting him to take such measures as his Majesty in his wisdom shall deem convenient, in order to avert the calamities of war and the dangers of discord from his frontier.

ALPUENTE.

God forbid that so great a king should fall upon us! O Lord, save us from our enemy, who would eat us up quick, so despitefully and hungrily is he set against us.

BAÑOS.

Read the manifesto...why do you laugh? is not this a declaration of hostilities?

ALPUENTE.

To Spaniards, yes. I laughed at the folly and impudence of men, who, for the present of a tobacco-box with a fool's head upon it, string together these old peeled pearls of diplomatic eloquence, and foist them upon the world as arguments and truths. Do kings imagine that they can as easily deceive as they can enslave? and that the mind is as much under their snaffle, as the body is under their axe and halter? Shew me one of them, Lopez, who has not violated some promise, who has not usurped some territory, who has not oppressed and subjugated some neighbour: then I will believe him, then I will obey him, then I will acknowledge that those literary heralds who trumpet forth his praises with the newspaper in their hands, are creditable and upright and uncorrupted. The courage of Spain delivered these wretches from the cane and drum-head of a Corsican: which of them did not crouch before him? which did not flatter him? which did not execute his orders? which did not court his protection? which did not solicit his favour? which did not entreat his forbearance? which did not implore his pardon? which did not

abandon and betray him? No ties either of blood or of religion led or restrained these neophytes in holiness. And now forsooth the calamities of war and the dangers of discord are to be averted, by arming one part of our countrymen against the other, by stationing a military force on our frontier, for the reception of murderers and traitors and incendiaries, and by pointing the bayonet and cannon in our faces. When we smiled at the insults of a beaten enemy, they dictated terms and conditions. At last his *most christian majesty* tells his army, that the nephew of Henry the fourth shall march against us...with his feather.

BAÑOS.

Ah! that weighs more. The French army will march over fields which cover French armies, and over which the oldest and bravest part of it fled in ignominy and dismay, before our shepherd-boys and hunters. What the veterans of Napoleon failed to execute the household of Louis will accomplish. Parisians! let your comic-opera-house lie among its ruins; it cannot be wanted this season.

ALPUENTE.

Shall those battalions which fought so many years for freedom, so many for glory, be supplementary bands to barbarians from Caucasus and Imaus? shall they shed the remainder of their

blood to destroy a cause, for the maintenance of which they offered up its first libation? Time will solve this problem, the most momentous in its solution that ever lay before man. If we are conquered, of which at present I have no apprehension, Europe must become the theatre of new wars, and be divided first into three parts, afterwards into two, and the next generation will see all her states and provinces the property of one autocrat, and governed by the most ignorant and lawless of her nations.

BAÑOS.

Never was there a revolution, or material change in government, effected with so little bloodshed, so little opposition, so little sorrow or disquietude, as ours. Months had passed away, years were rolling over us, institutions were consolidating, superstition was relaxing, ingratitude and perfidy were as much forgotten by us, as our services and sufferings were forgotten by Ferdinand, when emissaries and gold and arms, and *Faith*, inciting to discord and rebellion, crossed our frontier. The religion of Constantine and of Charlemagne, falsely called the christian, and subversive of its doctrines and its benefits, roused brother against brother, son against father, and our fortresses were garnished with the bayonets of France, and echoed with the watch-

words of the Vatican. If Ferdinand had regarded his oath, and had acceded, in *our* sense of the word *faith*, to the constitution of his country, from which there hardly was a dissentient voice, among the industrious and the unambitious, among the peaceable and the wise, would he have eaten one dinner with less appetite, or have embroidered one petticoat with less taste? would the saints along his chapel-walls have smiled upon him less graciously, or would thy tooth, holy Dominic, have left a less pleasurable impression on his lips? Only two strong truths could have shocked him, instead of the many personal ones he drew upon his head; namely, that *damnable* does not mean *combustible*, and that *there* is the worst heresy where is imposture for the sake of power or profit. Such truths however are now, it appears, to be bundled up with gorse, broom, and hazel; and he who exposed the mysteries of the Inquisition, may soon be a prisoner in its lowest chambers, having been expelled from the territory, as might be expected, of the most christian king. His most christian majesty demands *that Ferdinand the seventh may give his people those institutions which they can have from him only.* Yes, these are his expressions, Alpuente; these the doctrines

for the propagation of which our country is to be invaded with fire and sword; this is government, this is order, this is faith! Ferdinand *was* at liberty to give us his institutions: he gave them: what were they? the inquisition in all its terrors, absolute and arbitrary sway, scourges and processions, monks and missionaries, and a tooth of saint Dominic to crown them all. Our priests are more powerful than God himself. So strange and intractable a creature was man, not only when he was made but when he was making, that God rested himself immediately after the operation; now, Señor, here comes before you, from Astorga or Las Kerreras, a clever young prig of a priestling, puts a wafer into a watchcase, lifts it up half an ell above the louse-roost, and, by the body of Saint Iacomo, out come a brace or leash of Gods created at a word, and astart at the tinkling of a bell. To support the throne that crushes us, and the altar that choaks us, march forward the warlike Louis and the preux Chateaubriant, known among his friends to be firm in belief, as Hobbes, Talleyrand, or Spinoza; and behold them advancing side by side against the calm opponents of Roman bulls and French charts. Although his majesty be brave as Maximin at a breakfast,

he will find it easier to eat his sixtyfour cutlets than to conquer Spain. I doubt whether the same historian shall have to commemorate both exploits.

ALPUENTE.

An imprudent step, amidst armies raised for the defence of other principles, may be ruinous to his dynasty.

BAÑOS.

Principles do not much influence the unprincipled, nor mainly the principled. We talk on principle, but we act on interest. The French army will find little plunder; and the French people must endure new taxes and impositions. A Spanish war may precipitate Louis XVIII where an American war dragged in its consequences Louis XVI, to a fate which, if he had not experienced it, he would be acknowledged to have deserved.

ALPUENTE.

In wars the least guilty are the sufferers. In these, as in every thing, we should contract as much as possible the circle of human misery. The deluded and enslaved should be so far spared as is consistent with security: the most atrocious of murderers and incendiaries, the purveyors and hirers of them, should be removed at any expense

or hazard. If we shew little mercy to the robber who enters a house by force, and if less ought to be shewn to him who should enter it in the season of distress and desolation, what portion of it ought to be extended towards those who assail every house in our country? How much of crime and wretchedness may often be averted, how many years of tranquility may sometimes be ensured to the world by one wellchosen example! Is it not better than to witness the grief of the virtuous for the virtuous, and the extinction of those bright and lofty hopes, for which the best and wisest of every age contended? Where is the man, worthy of the name, who would be less affected at the lamentation of one mother for her son, slain in defending his country, than at the extermination of some six or seven usurpers, commanding or attempting its invasion? National safety legitimates every mean employed upon it. Criminals have been punished differently in different countries: but all enlightened, all honest, all civilized men must agree *who* are criminals. The Athenians were perhaps as well-informed and intelligent as the people on lake Ladoga: they knew nothing of the knout, I confess, and no family amongst them boasted a succession of as-

sassins, in wives, sons, fathers, and husbands; but he who endangered or injured his country was condemned to the draught of hemlock. They could punish the offence in another manner; if any nation cannot, shall that nation therefore leave it unpunished? and shall the guiltiest of men enjoy impunity, from a consideration of modes and means? Justice is not to be neglected because what is preferable is unattainable. A housebreaker is condemned to die, a city-breaker is celebrated by an inscription over the gate. The murder of thousands, soon perpetrated and past, is not the greatest mischief he does: it is followed by the baseness of millions, deepening for ages. Every virtuous man in the universe is a member of that grand Amphictyonic council, which should pass sentence on the too powerful, and provide that it be duly executed. It is just and it is necessary, that those who pertinaciously insist on an unnatural state of society, should suffer by the shock things make in recovering their equipoise.

We may indeed avoid a war if we will adopt the rickety children of our neighbours: if we will only build a house of peers we may live quietly in our own.

BAÑOS.

A peerage I consider as the parkpaling of de-

spotism; arranged to keep in creatures tame and wild for diversion and luxury, and to keep out the people. Kings are to peerages, what poles are to ropedancers, enabling them to play their tricks above the heads of the people with greater confidence and security*. The wisest and the most independent of the English parliaments declared the thing useless. If the opinion of that nation is now favorable to it, let us respect it, but let us also teach that nation to respect ours, always less biassed by private interests and less addicted to party. The principal gods of antiquity had each his favorite tree; and some nations too, the English for example, theirs...the oak. The Spaniard has rather the qualities of the cedar: patient of cold and heat, nourished on little, lofty and dark, unbending and incorruptible.

Nothing should stand between the people and the chief magistrate: the laws alone should be checks: a free people can acknowledge no other. In these religion is included, which indeed is the great law-head whence they all emanate. It is written in the heart of every man; but it is often

* This (as must be evident from the Commentary of judge Blackstone, and from the sermons of many dignitaries of the church) is inapplicable to England.

so misspelt as to become a matter of contest, by the notaries that would traffic in transcribing it.

The French, ridiculous as it may appear, would be our teachers. Let us not envy them the facility with which they build up constitutions and pull them down again, with which they take oaths and counter-oaths, with which while they violate honesty they declame on honour; let us only ask of them who of their most applauded public men has not been both traitor and perjurer; who among them has not been the deserter of his country or its deluder. Ingratitude, the most odious of crimes in other countries, is not even a blemish there: the sign of the cross laid over the uniform heals it perfectly. Read over the list of marshals: which of them has not abandoned his benefactor? which of them does not drink to the health of Louis from wine poured out to them by Napoleon?

Dignity without pride was formerly the characteristic of greatness: the revolution in morals is completed, and it is now pride without dignity. Republics give commissions for robbery, and despots give keys to secure it; so that every thief, issuing from the foul and slippery allies of politics, is glad to creep under the ermine. Look again at the French marshals, whose heads are now peeping out from it, in quest of fresh plunder! to

which of all the number does not my remark apply, even of those whose palms and foreheads are the least deeply branded?

France is strong by the weakness of Spain, in some degree; and the elder branch of the Bourbons has always had the means of inculcating this truth on the younger, and of indemnifying it for its acquiescence: if your people are flourishing they will be strong; if they are strong they will be turbulent: the richer they are, the poorer will you be. Let them recover their rights, as they call them, and you will lose your mines and your chases. The most wretched nations make the most splendid kings, as the thinnest rags the most lustrous paper.

ALPUENTE.

England, I trust, will exert her influence and her authority. She loses what France gains.

BAÑOS.

There are two which you cannot trust at once; Experience and England. She seems resolved to adopt the principles of the holy alliance; her king, it is said, has approved them, and has expressed his regret that the Constitution did not permitt him to enter into the confederacy: the first time, I believe, that a king of England has openly regretted the precautions imposed on him, by the

constitution which placed his family on the throne. If we should go farther than we have done, if we should vote, on proofs of treason, that our king has abdicated his, will England condemn in us what in herself she glorifies? No, England will not condemn us, but her government will abandon us.

ALPUENTE.

Yet at this moment she could obtain from us more than all her wars have given her. By the cession of a fortress, from which she derives no other advantage than the appointment of an old drowsy governor to about one hundred thousand crowns yearly, she might possess our African harbours, which alone would give her the dominion both of the Atlantic sea and of the Mediterranean: she might also, for other trifling sacrifices, which in the end would strengthen and enrich her, be mistress of that American island which secures and provisions all the others, if well managed, and which gives her advantages, beyond her calculation, in those dreadful conflicts that must decide hereafter whether the mother or the daughter shall be mistress of the seas.

BANOS.

Spain once ruled them; England rules them

now: Spain was as confident that her supremacy would be eternal as England now is. From the time that we adopted a French family and French principles we began to decay, and it is in vain that purblind politicians seek the germs of our corruption in America. Let us, Alpuente, rather look to that country for regeneration. There the Spaniard shoots up again: there also we perhaps may lay our bones at last.

ALPUENTE.

Eighty years have thrown their burden upon mine: they are not worth the freight. I can still watch for my country: I can still mount guard. No voice is such an incentive to valour as the feeble voice of age; neither flag nor trumpet marshals it, like a man of eighty dead on his threshold.

CONVERSATION XV.

HENRY VIII

AND

ANNE BOLEYN.

HENRY VIII

AND

ANNE BOLEYN.

HENRY.

Dost thou know me, Nanny, in this yeoman's dress? Blood! does it require so long and vacant a stare to recollect a husband, after a week or two? No tragedy-tricks with me! a scream, a sob, or thy kerchief a trifle the wetter, were enough. Why! verily the little fool faints in earnest. These whey faces, like their kinsfolk the ghosts, give us no warning. Hast had water enough upon thee? take that then...art thyself again?

ANNE.

Father of mercies! do I meet again my husband, as was my last prayer on earth! do I behold my beloved lord...in peace...and pardoned, my partner in eternal bliss! It was his voice. I cannot

see him...why cannot I? O why do these pangs interrupt the transports of the blessed!

HENRY.

Thou openest thy arms: faith! I came for that: Nanny, thou art a sweet slut*: thou groanest,

* Henry was not unlearned, nor indifferent to the costlier externals of a gentleman, but in manners and language he was hardly on a level with our ostlers of the present day. He was fond of bearbaitings and other such amusements in the midst of the rabble, and would wrestle with Francis I. His reign is one continued proof, flaring and wearisome as a Lapland summer-day, that even the English form of government, under a sensual king with money at his disposal, may serve only to legitimatize injustice. The Constitution was still insisted on, in all its original strength and purity, by those who had abolished many of its fundamental laws, and had placed the remainder at the discretion of the king. It never has had a more zealous advocate than Empson. This true patriot of legitimacy requested on his trial, that, "if he and Dudley were punished, it might not be divulged to other nations, lest they should inferr that the final dissolution of the English government was approaching."

On the government and king, only one opinion now subsists: but perhaps there are some who, from malignity or scanty knowledge, doubt the innocence of Anne Boleyn. In fact she was too innocent for her station. The frank and unsuspicious gaiety of her temper, the restless playfulness of high spirits, which we often saw formerly in the families of country gentlemen, first captivated the affections and afterwards raised the jealousy of Henry. There is no instance in any public trial (not even where the defendent was acquitted) of accusations so improbable and ill-supported. Those who entertain no doubt whatever of her purity, acknowledge her indiscretion: but if indiscretion is far removed from all indecency, from all injury to others, why censure it? What

wench: art in labour? Faith! among the mistakes of the night, I am ready to think almost that thou hast been drinking, and that I have not.

ANNE.

God preserve your Highness: grant me your forgiveness for one slight offence: my eyes were heavy; I fell asleep while I was reading; I did not know of your presence at first, and when I did I could not speak. I strove for utterance; I wanted no respect for my liege and husband.

HENRY.

My pretty warm nestling, thou wilt then lie! thou wert reading and aloud too, with thy saintly cup of water by thee, and...what! thou art still girlishly fond of those dried cherries!

ANNE.

I had no other fruit to offer your Highness the first time I saw you, and you were then pleased to invent for me some reason why they should be

they call indiscretion in an unfortunate queen they would call affability in a fortunate one. Lightness of spirits, which had made all about her happy the whole course of her life, made her so the last day of it. Nothing I have written or could write on her, is so affecting as the few words she spoke to the constable of the tower, "*laughing heartily*." She was beheaded on the nineteenth of May, and Henry on the morrow married Jane Seymour.

acceptable. I did not dry these: may I present them, such as they are? we shall have fresh next month.

HENRY.

Thou art always driving away from the discourse. One moment it suits thee to know me, another not.

ANNE.

Remember, it is hardly three months since I miscarried*; I am still weak and liable to swoons.

HENRY.

Thou hast however thy bridal cheeks, with lustre upon them when there is none elsewhere, and obstinate lips, resisting all impression: but, now thou talkest about miscarrying, who is the father of that boy?

ANNE.

Yours and mine... he who has taken him to his

* Anne Boleyn miscarried of a son January the twenty-ninth, 1536: the king concluded from this event that his marriage was disagreeable to God. He had abundance of conclusions for believing that his last marriage was disagreeable to God, whenever he wanted a fresh one, and was ready in due time to give up this too with the same resignation; but he never had any *conclusions* of doing a thing disagreeable to God when a divorce or decapitation was in question. Cruelty, which, if not the only sin, is certainly the greatest, has been overlooked as one altogether by the zealots of religion.

own home, before (like me) he could struggle or cry for it.

HENRY.

Pagan, or worse, to talk so! He did not come into the world alive: there was no baptism.

ANNE.

I thought only of our loss: my senses are still confounded. I did not give him my milk, and yet I loved him tenderly; for I often fancied, had he lived, how contented and joyful he would have made you and England.

HENRY.

No subterfuges and escapes...I warrant, thou canst not say, whether at my enterance, thou wert waking or wandering.

ANNE.

Faintness and drowsiness came upon me suddenly.

HENRY.

Well, since thou really and truly sleepedst, what didst dream of?

ANNE.

I begin to doubt whether I did indeed sleep.

HENRY.

Ha! false one...never two sentences of truth together...but come, what didst think about, asleep or awake?

ANNE.

I thought that God had pardoned me my offences, and had received me unto him.

HENRY.

And nothing more?

ANNE.

That all my prayers had been heard, and that all my wishes were accomplishing: the angels alone can enjoy more beatitude than this.

HENRY.

Vexatious little devil! she says nothing now about me, merely from perverseness... Hast thou never thought about me, nor about thy falsehood and adultery?

ANNE.

If I had committed any kind of falsehood, in regard to you or not, I should never have rested until I had thrown myself at your feet and obtained your pardon: but if ever I had been guilty of that other crime, I know not whether I should have dared to implore it, even of God's mercy.

HENRY.

Thou hast heretofore cast some soft glances upon Smeaton; hast thou not?

ANNE.

He taught me to play on the virginals, as you

know, when I was little, and thereby to please your Highness.

HENRY.

And Brereton and Norris, what have they taught thee?

ANNE.

They are your servants, and trusty ones.

HENRY.

Has not Weston told thee plainly that he loved thee?

ANNE.

Yes; and...

HENRY.

What didst thou?

ANNE.

I defied him.

HENRY.

Is that all?

ANNE.

I could have done no more if he had told me that he hated me. Then indeed I should have incurred more justly the reproaches of your Highness: I should have smiled.

HENRY.

We have proofs abundant: they shall one and all confront thee...aye, clap thy hands and kiss my sleeve, harlot!

ANNE.

O that so great a favour is vouchsafed me! my honour is secure; my husband will be happy again; he will see my innocence.

HENRY.

Give me now an account of the monies thou hast received from me, within these nine months: I want them not back: they are letters of gold in record of thy guilt. Thou hast had no fewer than fifteen thousand pounds within that period, without even thy asking; what hast done with it, wanton?

ANNE.

I have regularly placed it out to interest.

HENRY.

Where? I demand of thee.

ANNE.

Among the needy and ailing. My lord archbishop has the account of it, sealed by him weekly*: I also had a copy myself: those who took away

* The duke of Norfolk obtained an order that the archbishop of Canterbury should retire to his palace of Lambeth on the queen's trial. Burnet says that she had distributed, in the last nine months of her life, between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds among the poor; a sum equal in value to nearly ten times the amount at present. It tends to prove how little she could have reserved for vanities or for favorites.

my papers may easily find it, for there are few others, and all the rest lie open.

HENRY.

Think on my munificence to thee; recollect who made thee...dost sigh for what thou hast lost?

ANNE.

I do indeed.

HENRY.

I never thought thee ambitious; but thy vices creep out one by one.

ANNE.

I do not regrett that I have been a queen and am now no longer so, nor that my innocence is called in question by those who never knew me: but I lament that the good people, who loved me so cordially, hate and curse me; that those who pointed me out to their daughters for imitation, check them when they speak about me; and that he whom next to God I have served with most devotion, is my accuser. O my lord, my husband, and king! the judgements of God are righteous: on this surely we all must think alike.

HENRY.

And what then? speak out...again I command thee, speak plainly...thy tongue was not so torpid but this moment.

ANNE.

If any doubt remains upon your royal mind of your equity in this business; should it haply seem possible to you that passion or prejudice, in yourself or another, may have warped so strong an understanding, do but supplicate the Almighty to strengthen and enlighten it, and he will hear you.

HENRY.

What! thou wouldst fain change thy quarters, aye?

ANNE.

My spirit is detached and ready, and I shall change them shortly, whatever your Highness may determine.

HENRY.

Yet thou appearest hale and resolute, and (they tell me) smirkest and smilest to them all.

ANNE.

The withered leaf catches the sun sometimes, little as it can profit by it; and I have heard stories of the breeze, that sets in when daylight is about to close, and how constant it is, and how refreshing. My heart indeed is now sustained strangely: it became the more sensibly so from that time forward, when power and grandeur and all things terrestrial were sunk from sight. Every act of kindness from those about me gives me satisfac-

tion and pleasure, such as I did not feel formerly. I was worse before God chastened me; yet I was never an ingrate. What pains have I taken to find out the village-girls, who placed their posies in my chamber ere I arose in the morning! how gladly would I have recompensed the forester who lit up a brake on my birthnight, which else had warmed him half the winter! But these are times past: I was not queen of England.

HENRY.

Nor adulterous, nor heretical.

ANNE.

God be praised!

HENRY.

Learned saint, thou knowest nothing of the lighter, but perhaps canst inform me about the graver of them.

ANNE.

Which may it be, my liege?

HENRY.

Which may it be, pestilence! I marvel that the walls of this tower do not crack around us at such impiety.

ANNE.

I would be instructed by the wisest of theologians; such is your Highness.

HENRY.

Are the sins of the body, foul as they are, comparable to those of the soul?

ANNE.

When they are united they must be worst.

HENRY.

Go on, go on: thou pushest thy own breast against the sword: God has deprived thee of thy reason for thy punishment. I must hear more; proceed, I charge thee.

ANNE.

An aptitude to believe one thing rather than another from ignorance or weakness, or from the more persuasive manner of the teacher, or from his purity of life, or from the strong impression of a particular text at a particular time, and various things besides, may influence and decide our opinion; and the hand of the Almighty, let us hope, will fall gently on human fallibility.

HENRY.

Opinion in matters of faith! rare wisdom! rare religion! Troth! Anne, thou hast well sobered me: I came rather warmly and lovingly; but those light ringlets, by the holy rood, shall not shade this shoulder much longer. Nay, do not start; I tapp it for the last time, my sweetest,

If the Church permitted it, thou shouldst set forth on the long journey with the eucharist between thy teeth, however loth.

ANNE.

Love your Elizabeth, my honoured Lord, and God bless you! She will soon forget to call me; do not chide her; think how young she is*.

Could I, could I kiss her, but once again! it would comfort my heart... or break it.

* Elizabeth was not quite three years old at her mother's death, being born the seventh of September, 1533.

It does not appear that the Defender of the Faith brought his wife to the scaffold for the good of her soul, nor that she was pregnant at the time, which would have added much to the merit of the action, as there is the probability that the child would have been heretical. Caspar Scioppius, who flourished in the same century, says, in his *Classicum belli sacri*, that the children of heretics should not be pardoned, lest, if they grow up, they be implicated in the wickedness of their parents, and perish eternally.

Literature and Religion seem to have been contending one hundred years unintermittingly, which of them should be most efficient in banishing all humanity and all civility from the world, the very things which it was their business to propagate and preserve, and without which they not only are useless but pernicious. Scioppius stood as bottle-holder to both in all their most desperate attacks. He, who

was so munificent to children, in little faggots, little swords, and little halters, gave also a *christmas-box* to our king James I. *Alexipharmacum regium felli draconum et veneno aspidum, sub Philippi Mornæi de Plessis nuperâ papatûs historiâ abdito, appositum, et serenissimo Domino, Jacobo Magnæ Britanniæ regi,* strenæ Januariæ *loco, muneri missum.* From the inexhaustible stores of his generosity, he made another such present to this monarch. *Collyrium Regium, Britanniæ regi, graviter ex oculis laboranti, muneri missum.*

Sir Henry Wootton, who found him in Madrid, to requite him for his christmas-box and box of salve, ordered him to be whipped without a metaphor; on which Lavanda says, Quid Hispane calleat Scioppius haud scio; si quid tamen istius linguæ in ipso fuit, tunc opinor exseruit maxime quando in Hispaniâ Anglice vapulavit.

The remedies of Henry were more infallible, and his gifts more royal.

CONVERSATION XVI.

LORD CHESTERFIELD

AND

LORD CHATHAM

LORD CHESTERFIELD

AND

LORD CHATHAM.

CHESTERFIELD.

It is true, my lord, we have not always been of the same opinion, or, to use a better, truer, and more significant expression, of the same *side* in politics, yet I never heard a sentence from your Lordship which I did not listen to with deep attention. I understand that you have written some pieces of admonition and advice to a young relative: they are mentioned as being truly excellent: I wish I could have profited by them when I was composing mine on a similar occasion.

CHATHAM.

My lord, you certainly would not have done it, even supposing they contained, which I am far from believing, any topics that could have escaped your penetrating view of manners and morals; for your Lordship and I set out diversely from the

very threshold. Let us then rather hope that what we both have written, with an equally good intention, may produce its due effect; which indeed, I am afraid, may be almost as doubtful, if we consider how ineffectual were the cares and exhortations, and even the daily example and high renown, of the most zealous and prudent men, on the life and conduct of their children and disciples. Let us however hope the best rather than fear the worst, and believe that there never was a right thing done or a wise one spoken in vain, although the fruit of them may not spring up in the place designated or at the time expected.

CHESTERFIELD.

Pray, if I am not taking too great a freedom, give me the outline of your plan.

CHATHAM.

Willingly, my lord: but since a greater man than either of us has laid down a more comprehensive one, containing all I could bring forward, would it not be preferable to consult it? I differ in nothing from Locke, unless it be that I would recommend the lighter as well as the graver part of the ancient classics, and the constant practise of imitating them in early youth. This is no change in the system, and no larger an addition than a woodbine to a sacred grove.

CHESTERFIELD.

I do not admire Mr. Locke.

CHATHAM.

Nor I: he is too simply grand for admiration: I contemplate and revere him. Equally deep and clear, he is both philosophically and grammatically the most elegant of English writers.

CHESTERFIELD.

If I expressed by any motion of limb or feature my surprise at this remark, your Lordship I hope will pardon me a slight and involuntary transgression of my own precept. I must entreat you, before we move a step further in our inquiry, to inform me whether I am really to consider him, in style, the most elegant of our prose authors.

CHATHAM.

Your Lordship is capable of forming an opinion on this point certainly no less correct than mine.

CHESTERFIELD.

Pray assist me.

CHATHAM.

Education and grammar are surely the two dryest of all subjects on which a conversation can turn: yet, if the ground is not promiscuously sown, if what ought to be clear is not covered, if what ought to be covered is not bare, and above all if the plants are choice ones, we may spend a

few moments on it not unpleasantly. It appears then to me, that elegance in prose composition is mainly this: a just admission of topics and of words; neither too many nor too few of either; enough of sweetness in the sound to induce us to enter and sit still; enough of illustration and reflection to change the posture of our minds when they would tire, and enough of sound matter in the complex to repay us for our attendence. I could perhaps be more logical in my definition, and more concise; but am I at all erroneous?

CHESTERFIELD.

I see not that you are.

CHATHAM.

My ear is well satisfied with Locke: I find nothing idle or redundant in him.

CHESTERFIELD.

But, in the opinion of you graver men, would not some of his principles lead too far?

CHATHAM.

The danger is that few will be led by them far enough: most who begin with him stop short, and, pretending to find pebbles in their shoes, throw themselves down upon the ground and complain of their guide.

CHESTERFIELD.

What then can be the reason why Plato, so

much less intelligible, is so much more quoted and applauded?

CHATHAM.

The difficulties we never trie are no difficulties to us. Those who are upon the summit of a mountain know in some measure its altitude, by comparing it with all objects around; but those who stand at the bottom and never mounted it, can compare it with few only, and with those imperfectly: so fares it with Plato and his readers on one side, and with Plato and his talkers on the other. Until a short time ago I could have conversed more fluently about him than I can at present: I had read all the titles to his dialogues and several scraps of commentary; these I have now forgotten, and am indebted to long attacks of the gout for what I have acquired instead.

CHESTERFIELD.

A very severe school-master! I hope he allows a long vacation.

CHATHAM.

Severe he is indeed, and although he sets no example of regularity, he exacts few observances and teaches many things. Without him I should have had less patience, less learning, less reflection, less leisure; in short, less of every thing but of sleep.

CHESTERFIELD.

Plato, I see from the Latin version, lies open on the table: the paragraphs marked with pencil, I presume, are fine passages.

CHATHAM.

I have noted those only which appeared reprehensible, and chiefly where he is disingenuous and malicious.

CHESTERFIELD.

They indeed ought to be the most remarkable of all in the works of a philosopher. If the malice is against those who are thought greater or as great, it goes towards the demonstration that they are so: if on the contrary the objects of it are inferior to himself, he cannot take them up without raising them: unworthy of notice, they are greatly more unworthy of passion. Surely no philosopher would turn to an opposite conclusion from that which in the commencement he had designed to prove; as here he must do.

CHATHAM.

He avoids all open hostility to Democritus and Xenophon and Aristoteles, but I fancy I have detected him in more than one dark passage, with a dagger in his hand and a bitter sneer on his countenance. I know not whether it has been observed before that these words are aimed at the

latter, the citizen of another state and the commentator of other laws.

Οὐδ' ἐπιθυμία σε ἄλλης πόλεως οὐδ' ἄλλων νόμων ἔλαβεν εἰδέναι, ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς σοι ἱκανοὶ ἦμεν καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα πόλις.

The compliment is more injurious to Socrates, for whom it was intended, than the insinuation to Aristoteles. But the prime object of his hatred, open here and undissembled, is Prodicus, author of the beautiful allegory in which Pleasure and Virtue offer themselves to the choice of Hercules. In one place he mentions him with Polus and many others: the least difficult and least ingenious of malignant expressions, where great genius is the subject of calumny and invective. One hardly could imagine that he had the assurance and effrontery to call Epicharmus the chief of comic writers, before a people who that very day perhaps had been at a comedy of Aristophanes. The talent of Epicharmus lay in puns and ribaldry, and Hiero punished him for immodest conversation.

CHESTERFIELD.

I have read somewhere that, when Plato was young, it was predicted of him, from his satirical vein, that he would become in time a substitute for Archilochus.

CHATHAM.

Athenæus, I think, has recorded it. I do not find so much wit as I expected; and, to speak plainly, his wit is the most tiresome and dull part of him: for who can endure a long series of conversations full of questions to entrap a sophist? Why not lead us to the trap at once by some unexpected turn? There is more ingenuity and more gracefulness in a single paper of the *Spectator*, than in six or eight of these dialogues, in all which, excepting the *Phædo*, I was disappointed.

CHESTERFIELD.

The language is said to be very masterly and sonorous.

CHATHAM.

Αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχει, καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοίωσιν οὐδέμιαν ἐνδέχεται. Phædo.

CHESTERFIELD.

Come, come, my lord; do not attempt to persuade me, that an old woman's charm to cure a corn or remove a wart, or a gypsey-girl's to catch a sixpence, is Plato's Greek.

CHATHAM.

Look yourself.

CHESTERFIELD.

I have forgotten the characters pretty nearly:

faith! they appear to me, from what I can pick up, to correspond with the sounds you gave them. Jupiter, it is said by the ancients, would have spoken no other language than that of Plato: if ever Jupiter uttered such sounds as these, it could be only when he was crossing the Hellespont.

CHATHAM.

What do you think of this jingle? Πρῶτον εὐλαβηθῶμέν τι πάθος μὴ πάθωμεν.

CHESTERFIELD.

I really thought that his language was accurate and harmonious to the last degree.

CHATHAM.

Generally it is so: his language is the best of him. We moderns are still children in our tongues, at least we English. For my own part, I always spoke in parliament what I considered the most effectual to persuade my hearers, without a care or a thought touching the structure of my sentences: but knowing that the ancient orators and writers laid the first foundation of their glory upon syllables, I was surprised to find no fewer than nine short ones together in this ambitious and eloquent author...ἄνδρας ἀποδεδοκιμακότες. Phædo. The accents, which were guides to them, although unwritten, may have taken off somewhat from this peculiarity, and may have been a sort of support

to the feebleness of the sound. No modern language can admitt the concourse of so many such; and the Latin was so inadequate to the supply of them, that it produced, I believe, but one galliambic in the times of its strength and fertility, which poem required them in greater numbers, and closer together than any other, but did not receive nine conjointly.

CHESTERFIELD.

Cicero was himself a trifler in cadences, and whoever thinks much about them will become so, if indeed the very thought when it enters is not trifling.

CHATHAM.

I am not sure that it is; for an orderly and sweet sentence, by gaining our ear, conciliates our affections; and the voice of a beggar has often more effect upon us than his distress. Your mention of Cicero on this occasion, reminds me of his *O fortunatam natam me consule Romam.* Playful as he was in his vanity, I do not believe the verse is his: but Plato wrote ἀλλὰ παῤ αὐτοὺς αὖ τοὺς δεῖν οὗς ὄντας ταῦτα, &c. As for wit, what think you of this? *I am ready, O Socrates, to give myself up to the strangers, to flea me worse than they flea me now, if the fleaing ends not in a hide, as that of Marsyas did, but in virtue.* Or what think you of a

project to make a doll and dedicate it to Memory? The stuff that follows is worse still. Towards the end of the volume, in the Gorgias, Polus says to Socrates, *Do not you see Archelaus, son of Perdiccas, reigning over the Macedonians?* to which Socrates replies, *If I do not see him, I hear of him.*

In the beginning of the same dialogue, Gorgias, at the request of Socrates to be brief, assents to his propositions, twice, by using the monosyllable: whereupon Socrates says, *I admire your replies, Gorgias: they are as short as they can be.* If the same monosyllable had been the answer to several questions in succession, and if those questions had been complicated and intricate, then, and then only, the remark had been wellplaced.

You remember, my Lord, the derivations made by Swift, of *Agamemnon*, and other names of heroes. These are hardly more absurd and ridiculous than almost all made by Plato, and attributed with great complacency to Socrates, of the same and similar, and are much less literal. It is incredible how erroneous were the most learned, both among the Greeks and Romans, on the origin of words.

CHESTERFIELD.

I have heard it reported that our own lexico-

graphers are subject to the same animadversion: but I can judge more adequately of bad reasoning or bad wit.

CHATHAM.

A very little of the latter tires and nauseates; but in the former there is generally something to exercise the ingenuity. I have seen persons who could employ a moment or two unreluctantly in straightening a crooked nail: with about the same labour and interest I would hammer upon an inexact thought. Here is one, which I wonder that Cicero, in mentioning the dialogue, has failed to remark. Our philosopher divides rhetoric into the true and the false; as if any part of a definition or description were to be founded on the defects of what is defined or described. Rhetoric may be turned to good or bad purposes; but this is no proof or indication that it must be divided into good and bad: the use of a thing is not the thing itself; how then is the abuse?

The wit of Plato's dialogues is altogether of a single kind, and of that which in a continuance is the least welcome; for irony is akin to cavil; and cavil, as the best wit either is goodnatured or wears the appearance of goodnature, is nearly its antipode. Plato has neither the grace of Xenophon nor the gravity of Cicero, who tempers it

admirably with urbanity and facetiousness. The characteristic of my author is, the dexterity and ease with which he supports and shifts an argument, and exhibits it in all its phases. Nevertheless, a series of interrogations, long as he draws them out for this purpose, would weary me in one dialogue; he continues them in twenty, with people of the same description, on the same subjects.

CHESTERFIELD.

It is rather an idle thing, for an old gentleman in a purple robe, to be sticking pins in every chair on which a sophist is likely to sit down; and rather a tiresome and cheerless one, to follow and stand by him, day after day, in the cold, laying gins for tom-tits.

CHATHAM.

In general, I own, he did so: but both he and Aristoteles turned occasionally their irony (of which indeed the latter had little) where irony is best employed; against false piety, against that which would be the substitute and not the support of morality.

The Greek language, more courteous than the Roman or the French or ours, and resembling in this property the Italian, in addressing a person, had ready, among other terms, *ὦ θαυμάσιε* and *ὦ Βέλτιστε*. Socrates meets an orderly good man, who, from

respect to the laws, is going to accuse his own father of a capital crime, as he imagines it to be; and, doubting if he understood him, asks ὁ σὸς, ὦ Βέλτιστε; Aristoteles, in the eighth book of his Ethics, gravely says that children ought to see no indecent statue or picture, unless it represent some God committing the obscenity.

In regard to their philosophy, and indeed to that of the ancients in general, there was little of sound and salutary which they did not derive from Democritus or from Pythagoras; from the former Aristoteles drew most, from the latter Plato. Cicero says improperly of Socrates, what is repeated every day in schools and colleges, that he first drew down Philosophy into private houses: Pythagoras had done so, more systematically and more extensively. Upon his tenets and his discipline were founded many institutions of the earlier and quieter converts to christianity.

CHESTERFIELD.

There is, I remember, a very dangerous doctrine attributed to this Democritus whom you mentioned before him; he said that governments should have two supporters, rewards and punishments. Now twelve hangmen, and even twelve judges, may be paid: but Mansfield, I suspect, would committ any man to Bridewell or the pil-

lory, who had broached a declaration so seditious, as that people of ordinary business, unhired for it, should be paid for doing their duty. National debts, he would inform the jury, are not to be aggravated by such idle and superfluous expenditure, encreased at any man's option.

CHATHAM.

I know not what my lord Mansfield, a worse enemy to our constitution than even that degraded and despicable prince for whose service he was educated, may think or dictate on the subject, but among all the books I ever read in which rewards and punishments are mentioned, I never found one where the words come in any other order than this; rewards first, then punishments: a plain evidence and proof to my humble understanding, that in the same succession they present themselves to the unperverted mind. We mention them not only in regard to our polity, but in contemplation of a better state hereafter; and there too they occurr to us as upon earth.

CHESTERFIELD.

In the pleadings of Mansfield, in his charges, in his decisions, in his addresses to parliament, I have heard nothing so strikingly true as these observations of your Lordship, and I wish I had heard nothing so novel.

CHATHAM.

I, in the name of our country, unite with you, my lord, in this wish. Let us trace again the more innocent wanderings of a greater man, I know not whether less prejudiced, but certainly less profligate and corrupt.

Socrates in the Gorgias is represented as saying, that he believes the soul and body both to exist in another state, although separately; the body just as it was in life, with all its infirmities, wounds, and distortions. This would be great injustice; for hence a long life, rendered so by frugality and temperance, would acquire, in part of its recompense, the imbecility of age, with deafness, blindness, and whatever else is most afflictive and oppressive in that condition. The soul carries upon its back the marks of floggings and bruizes and scars, contracted by perjuries on earth, and by the delivery *in* court of unjust sentences; such I believe, in this place, the meaning of *ἀδικίαι*, and not merely any common acts of injustice. The utility of such exposures in another life, he says, arises from example to others. But in what manner can they profit by this example? from what wickedness can they be deterred by these scenes of terror? Ideas as idly fanciful, as childishly silly, as his description of the infernal rivers, which

he derived from the poets, and which, without line or level, he led over places just as unfruitful afterwards as before. Returning to this strange body of his, it cannot be supposed an inert substance: the words *after death* mean *after this life upon earth.* If he would say that it were inert, he must suppose it to be motionless: when did it become so? Strange that it should have motion to reach Tartarus and should then lose it. If so, of what use could it be? He does not say it, nor mean it, I imagine.

CHESTERFIELD.

On some occasions, it appears, he leaves off meaning very abruptly.

CHATHAM.

It is not wonderful or strange that Aristoteles should ridicule his vagaries. Nothing can be more puerile and contemptible than the ideas he attributes to Socrates on future punishments: among the rest, that the damned appeal by name to those whom they have slain or wronged, and are dragged backwards and forwards from Tartarus to Cocytus and Periphlegethon, until the murdered or injured consent to pardon them. So the crime is punished, not according to its heinousness, but according to the kindness or severity of those who suffered by it. Now the greater crime is com-

mitted in having slain or injured the generous and kind man; the greater punishment is inflicted for injuring or slaying the ungenerous and unkind.

He was fond of puns too, and the worst and commonest, those on names. Ἤρεσεν οὖν μοι καὶ ἐν τῷ μύθῳ ὁ Προμηθεὺς μᾶλλον τοῦ Ἐπιμηθέως, ᾧ χρώμενος ἐγὼ καὶ προμηθούμενος, &c. and below ἀλλὰ Καλλίᾳ τῷ καλῷ, &c.

The worst is, that he attributes the silliest of sophistry and the basest of malignity to Socrates. A wise and virtuous man may have the misfortune to be at variance with a single great author among his contemporaries; but neither a virtuous nor a wise one can be drawn into hostilities against all the best: he to whom this happens must be imprudent or weak or wicked. Impudence may prompt some to tell you, that, with prodigious manliness and self-devotion, they hazard to cut their feet and break their shins by stemming the current, but that the perilous state of literature calls aloud on them, and that they encounter it equally for the public good, and the correction of the weak writer: but the public good, in my opinion, is ill promoted by telling men that all their other teachers are worth nothing, and that to be contented is to be dull, to be pleased is to be foolish; nor have I remarked or heard of any instance where morals have been improved by scurrility,

diffidence calmed, encouraged, sustained, and led forth, by violence, or genius exalted by contempt. I am sorry that this very great man should have partaken the infirmities of the very least in their worst propensities. This principally has induced me to shew you, that, within the few pages you see between my fingers, he has committed as grave faults in style and sentiment, not only as Prodicus, but (I will believe) as Polus. We hear from the unprejudiced, that Prodicus, like our master Locke, was exact in his definitions; we know that he arrived at the perfection of style; and our gratitude is due to him for one of the most beautiful works delivered to us from antiquity.

CHESTERFIELD.

Your Lordship has shewn me that a divine man, even with a swarm of bees from nose to chin, may cry loud and labour hard, and lay his quarter-staff about him in all directions, and still be a very indifferent buffoon.

CHATHAM.

Buffoonery is hardly the thing wherein a man of genius would be ambitious to excell; but, of all failures, to fail in a witticism is the worst; and the mishap is the more calamitous, in a drawn-out, detailed, and written one.

CHESTERFIELD.

Plato falls over his own sword; not by hanging it negligently or loosely, but by stepping with it awkwardly; and the derision he incurs is proportionate to the gravity of his gait. Half the pleasure in the world arises from malignity, and little of the other half is free from its encroachments. Those who enjoyed his smartness and versatility of attack, laugh as heartily at him as with him, demonstrate that a great man upon the ground is lower than a little man upon his legs, and conclude that the light of imagination leads only to gulphs and precipices.

CHATHAM.

We however, with greater wisdom and higher satisfaction, may survey him calmly and reverentially, as one of lofty, massy, comprehensive mind, whose failings myriads have partaken, whose excellences few; and we may consider him as an example, the more remarkable and striking to those we would instruct, for that very inequality and asperity of character, which many would exaggerate, and some conceal. Let us however rather trust Locke and Bacon; let us believe the one to be a wiser man, and the other both a wiser and better. I declare to you, I should have the

courage to say the same thing, if they were living, and expelled from court and Christchurch.

CHESTERFIELD.

We think more advantageously of artificial dignities while the bearers are living, more advantageously of real when they are dead.

CHATHAM.

The tomb is the pedestal of greatness. I make a distinction between God's great and the king's great.

CHESTERFIELD.

Very rightly. *Non bene conveniunt nec in unâ sede morantur.* So much the worse for both parties. Compliments are in their place only where there is full as much of weakness as of merit, so that when I express my admiration to your lordship, all idea of compliment must vanish. Permitt me then to say that I have always been much gratified at this among your other great qualities, that, possessing more wit than perhaps any man living, you have the moderation to use it rarely, and more often in friendship than in enmity.

CHATHAM.

Profligate men and pernicious follies may fairly and reasonably be exposed; light peculiarities may also be exhibited; but only in such a manner that he who gave the prototype would willingly take

the copy. But in general he who pursues another race of writers, is little better than a foxhunter who rides twenty miles from home for the sport: what can he do with his game when he has caught it? As he is only the servant of the dogs, so the satirist is only a caterer to the ferocious or false appetites of the most indiscriminating and brutal minds. Does he pretend that no exercise else is good for him? he confesses then an unsoundness in a vital part.

CHESTERFIELD.

Reflections such as these induced me long ago to preferr the wit of Addison and La Fontaine to all other: it is more harmless, more gay, and more insinuating.

CHATHAM.

Our own language contains in it a greater quantity and a greater variety of wit and humour, than all the rest of all ages and countries, closing only Cervantes, the Homer of irony, and not only of sharper and better-tempered wit than he who lies before me, but even of an imagination more vivid and poetical, a sounder too and shrewder philosopher. It must be conceded that we moderns are but slovens in composition, or ignorant for the most part of its regulations and laws; but we may insist that there have been amongst us those,

to whom, in all the higher magistratures of intellect, the gravest of them would have risen up, and whom they would have placed with proper deference at their side.

CHESTERFIELD.

I am happy, my lord, and grateful to you, that the conversation has taken a different turn from what I had expected. I came to receive some information from you on what might be profitable in the education of the young, and you have given me some which could be greatly so in that of the old. My system, I know, cannot be quite according to your sentiments, but as no man living hath a nobler air or a more dignified demeanour than your Lordship, I shall be flattered by hearing that what I have written on politeness meets in some degree your approbation.

CHATHAM.

I believe you are right, my lord. What is superficial in politeness, what we see oftenest, and what people generally admire most, must be laid upon a cold breast or will not stand: but whatever is most graceful in it can be produced only by the movements of the heart.

CHESTERFIELD.

I believe these movements are to be imitated, and as easily as those of the feet; and that all

good actors must beware of being moved too much from within. My lord, I do not enquire of you whether that huge quarto is the bible, for I see the letters on the back.

CHATHAM.

I did not imagine your Lordship was so religious: I am heartily glad to witness your veneration for a book, which, to say nothing of its holiness or authority, contains more specimens of genius and of taste than any other volume in existence.

CHESTERFIELD.

I kissed it from no such motive: I kissed it preparatorily to swearing on it, as your Lordship's power and credit is from this time forward at my mercy, that I never will divulge, so help me God! the knowledge I possess of your reading Greek and philosophy.

Lord Chatham left two sons: one inherited his pension, the other his power, neither of them his virtues, his manners, or his abilities; yet each fancied that he had the better part of the inheritance.

CONVERSATION XVII.

ARISTOTELES

AND

CALLISTHENES.

ARISTOTELES

AND

CALLISTHENES.

ARISTOTELES.

I REJOICE, O Callisthenes, at your return; and the more as I see you in the dress of your country, while others, who appear to me of the lowest rank, by their language and their physiognomy, are arrayed in the Persian robe, and mix the essence of rose with pich.

CALLISTHENES.

I thank the Gods, O Aristoteles, that I embrace you again; that my dress is a Greek one and an old one; that the conquests of Alexander have cost me no shame, and have encumbered me with no treasures.

ARISTOTELES.

Jupiter! what then are all those tapestries, for

I will not call them dresses, which the slaves are carrying after you, in attendence (as they say) on your orders?

CALLISTHENES.

They are presents from Alexander to Xenocrates; by which he punishes, as he declared to the Macedonians, both me and you: and I am well convinced that the punishment will not terminate here, but that he, at once so irascible and so vindictive, will soon exercise his new dignity of godship, by breaking our heads, or, in the wisdom of his providence, by removing them an arm's length from our bodies.

ARISTOTELES.

On this subject we must talk again. He has really punished me by his splendid gifts to Xenocrates, for he obliges me also to send him the best tunic I have; and you know that in my wardrobe I am, as appears to many, unphilosophically splendid. There are indeed no pearls in this tunic, but golden threads pursue the most intricate and most elegant design, the texture is the finest of Miletus, the wool is the softest of Tarentum, and the purple is Hermionic. He will sell Alexander's dresses, and wear mine; the consequence of which will be imprisonment or scourges.

CALLISTHENES.

A provident God forsooth in his benefits, our Alexander!

ARISTOTELES.

Much to be pitied if ever he returns to his senses! Justly do we call barbarians the wretched nations that are governed by kings; and amongst them all the most deeply plunged in barbarism is the ruler. Let us take any favorable specimen; Cyrus for instance, or Cambyses, or this Alexander: for however much you and I may despise him, seeing him often and nearly, he will perhaps leave behind him as celebrated a name as they. He is very little amidst philosophers, but very great amidst monarchs. Is he not undoing with all his might, what every wise man, and indeed every man in the order of things, is most solicitous to do? namely, does he not abolish all kindly and affectionate intercourse? does he not draw a line of distinction (which of all follies and absurdities is the wildest and most pernicious) between fidelity and truth? In the hour of distress and misery the eye of every mortal turns to friendship: in the hour of gladness and conviviality what is our want? 'tis friendship. When the heart overflows with gratitude, or with any other sweet and sacred sentiment, what is the word to which

it would give utterance? *my friend*. Having thus displaced the right feeling, he finds it necessary to substitute at least a strong one. The warmth, which should have been diffused from generosity and mildness, must come from the spiceman, the vintner, and the milliner: he must be perfumed, he must be drunk, he must toss about shawl and tiara. One would imagine that his first passion, his ambition, had an object: yet, before he was a God, he prayed that no one afterwards might pass the boundaries of his expedition, and he destroyed at Abdera, and in other places, the pillars erected as memorials by the Argonauts and by Sesostris*.

Perhaps you were present, when Alexander ran

* On the Argonautic expedition I had introduced a few remarks which interrupted the main current of the dialogue. The Greeks were fond of attributing to themselves all the great actions of remote antiquity: thus they feigned that Isis, *the daughter of Inachus,* taught the Egyptians laws and letters, &c. &c. I doubt whether the monuments and actions attributed to the Argonauts were not really those of Sesostris or Osiris or some other eastern conqueror; and even whether *the tale of Troy divine* be not, in part at least, translated. Many principal names, evidently not Grecian, and the mention of a language spoken by the Gods, in which the rivers and other earthly things are called differently from what they are called among men, are the foundations of my belief. The Hindoos, the Egyptians, and probably the Phrygians, (a very priestly nation) had their learned language quite distinct from the vulgar.

around the tomb of Achilles in honour of his memory: if Achilles were now living, or any hero like him, Alexander would swear his perdition. Neither his affection for virtue nor his enmity to vice is pure or rational. Observation has taught me that we do not hate those who are worse than ourselves because they are worse, but because we are liable to injury from them, and because (as almost always is the case) they are preferred to us; while those who are better we hate purely for being so. After their decease, if we remitt our hatred, it is because then they are more like virtue in the abstract than virtuous men, and are fairly out of our way.

As for the wisdom of Alexander, I do not expect from a Macedonian the prudence of an Epaminondas or a Phocion; but educated by such a father as Philip, and having with him in his army so many veteran captains, it excited no small ridicule in Athens, when it was ascertained that he and Darius, then equally eager for combat, missed each other's army in Cilicia.

CALLISTHENES.

He has done great things, but with great means: the generals you mention overcame more difficulties with less, and never were censured for any failure from deficiency of foresight.

ARISTOTELES.

There is as much difference between Epaminondas and Alexander as between the Nile and a winter torrent: in the latter there is more impetuosity, foam, and fury; more astonishment from spectators; but it is followed by devastation and barrenness: in the former there is an equable, a steddy, and perennial course, swelling from its ordinary state only for the benefit of mankind, and subsiding only when that has been secured.

I have not mentioned Phocion so often as I ought to have done; but now, Callisthenes, I will acknowledge that I consider him as the greatest man upon earth. He foresaw long ago what has befallen our country; and while others were proving to you that your wife, if a good woman, should be at the disposal of your next neighbour, and that if you love your children you should procure them as many fathers as you can, Phocion was practising all the domestic and all the social duties.

CALLISTHENES.

I have often thought that his style resembles yours...are you angry?

ARISTOTELES.

I will not dissemble to you that mine was formed upon his. Polieuctus, by no means a friend to

him, preferred it openly to that of Demosthenes, for its brevity, its comprehensiveness, and its perspicuity. There is somewhat more of pomp and solemnity in Demosthenes, and perhaps of harmony, but in Phocion there is all the acuteness of Pericles, all the wit of Aristophanes. He conquered with few soldiers, and he convinced with few words... I know not what better description I could give you either of a great captain or great orator. Now imagine for a moment the mischief which the system of Plato, just alluded to, would produce. First that women should be common. We hear that amongst the Etrurians they were so, and perhaps they are so still; but of what illustrious action do we read, ever performed by that ancient people? Thousands of years have elapsed without a single instance on record, of courage or generosity. With us one word, altered only in its termination, signifies both *father* and *country*: can he who is ignorant of the one be solicitous about the other? Never was there a true patriot who was not also, if a father, a kind one: never was there a good citizen who was not also an obedient and reverential son. Strange, to be ambitious of pleasing the multitude, and indifferent to the delight we may afford to those most near

to us, our parents and our children! Ambition is indeed the most inconsiderate of passions, none of which are considerate; for the ambitious man, by the weakest inconsistency, proud as he may be of his faculties and impatient as he may be to display them, prefers the opinion of the ignorant to his own. He would be what others can make him, and not what he could make himself without them. Nothing in fact is consistent and unambiguous but virtue.

Plato would make wives common, to abolish selfishness! the very mischief which above all others it would directly and immediately bring forth. There is no selfishness where there is a wife and family: the house is lighted up by the mutual charities: every thing atchieved for them is a victory, every thing endured for them is a triumph. How many vices are suppressed, that there may be no bad example! how many exertions made, to recommend and inculcate a good one! Selfishness then is thrown out of the question. He would perhaps make men braver by his exercises in the common field of affections. Now bravery is of two kinds; the courage of instinct and the courage of reason: animals have more of the former, men more of the latter; for I would

not assert, what many do, that animals have no reason, as I would not that men have no instinct. Whatever creature can be taught, must be taught by the operation of reason upon reason, small as may be the quantity called forth, or employed in calling it, and of however coarse matter may be the means. Instinct has no operation but upon the wants and desires. Those who entertain a contrary opinion, are unaware how inconsequently they speak, when they employ such expressions as these, "*We are taught by instinct.*" Courage, so necessary to the preservation of states, is not weakened by domestic ties, but is braced by them. Much is gained both on the side of reason and on the side of instinct. All creatures protect their young while they know it to be theirs, and neglect it when the traces of that memory are erased. Man cannot so soon lose the memory of it, because his recollective faculties are more comprehensive and more tenacious, and because, while in the brute creation the parental love, which in most animals is only on the female side, lessens after the earlier days, his increases as the organs of the new creature are developed. There is a desire of property in the wisest and best men, which Nature seems to have implanted as conservative of her works, and which also is necessary to encourage and keep

alive the arts. Phidias and our friend Apelles would never have existed as the Apelles and Phidias they appear, if property (I am ashamed of the solecism which Plato now forces on me) were common. A part of his scheme indeed may be accomplished in select and small communities, holden together by some religious bond, as we find among the disciples of Pythagoras: but this incomparable man never taught his followers that prostitution is a virtue, much less that it is the summit of perfection. They revered him, and most deservedly, as a father.. as what father? not such as Plato would fashion, but as a parent who had gained authority over his children, by his assiduous vigilance, his tender and peculiar care, in separating them, as far as possible, from whatever is noxious, in an intercourse with mankind.

To complete the system of selfishness, idleness, and licentiousness, the republican triad of Plato, nothing was wanting but to throw all property where he had thrown the wives and children. Who then should curb the rapacious? who should moderate the violent? The weaker could not work, the stronger would not. Food and raiment would fail; and we should be reduced to something worse than a state of nature; into a state of nature we can never be cast back, any more than

we can become children again. Civilization suddenly retrograde, generates at once the crimes and vices, not only of all its stages, but of the state anterior to it, without a single one of its advantages, if it indeed have any. Plato would make for ever all the citizens what we punish with death a single one for being once. He was a man of hasty fancy and slow reflection; more different from Socrates than the most violent of his adversaries. If he had said that in certain cases, a portion of landed property should be divided amongst the citizens, he had spoken sagely and equitably. After a long war, when a state is oppressed by debt, and when many, who have borne arms for their country, have also consumed their patrimony in its service, these, if they are fathers of families, should receive allotments from the estates of others who are not so, and who either were too young for warfare, or were occupied in less dangerous and more lucrative pursuits. It is also conducive to the public good, that no person should possess more than a certain and definite extent of land, to be limited by the population and produce: else the freedom of vote or the honesty of election must be extinguished, and the least active members of the community will occupy those places which require

the most activity. This is peculiarly needful in mercantile states, like ours, that every one may enjoy the prospect of becoming a landholder, and that the money accruing from the sale of what is curtailed on the larger properties, may again fall into commerce. A state may eventually be reduced to such distresses by war, even after victories, that it shall be expedient to deprive the rich of whatever they possess, beyond that which is requisite for the decent and frugal sustenance of a family. This extremity it is difficult to foresee; nor do I think it is arrived at, until the industrious and well-educated, in years of plenty, are unable by their best exertions to nourish and instruct their children.. a speculative case, which it cannot be dangerous or mischievous to state; for certainly when it occurs, the sufferers will appeal to the laws and forces of Nature, and not to the schools of rhetoric or philosophy. No situation can be imagined more painful or more abominable than this: while many, and indeed most, are more so, than that to which the wealthier would be reduced in amending it; since they would lose no comforts, no conveniences, no graceful and unencumbering ornaments of life, and very few luxuries, all which would be abundantly compensated to the

generality of them, by smoothening their mutual pretensions, and by extinguishing the restless spirit of their rivalry.

CALLISTHENES.

The visions of Plato have led to Reason: I marvel less that he should have been so extravagant, than that he should have scattered on that volume so little of what we admire in his shorter Dialogues.

ARISTOTELES.

I respect his genius, which however has not accompanied all his steps in this discussion; nor indeed do I censure in him what has been condemned by Xenophon; who wonders that he should attribute to Socrates long dissertations on the soul, and other abstruse doctrines, when that singularly acute reasoner discoursed with his followers on topics only of plain utility. For it is requisite that important things should be attributed to important men; and a sentiment would derive but small importance from the authority of Crito or Phædo. A much greater fault is attributable to Xenophon himself, who has not even preserved the coarse features of nations and of ages in his Cyropædia.

A small circle of wise men should mark the

rise of mind, as the Egyptian priests marked the rise of their river, and should leave it chronicled in their temples. Cyrus should not discourse like Solon.

CALLISTHENES.

You must also then blame Herodotus.

ARISTOTELES.

If I blame Herodotus, whom can I commend? He reminds me of Homer by his facility and his variety, and by the suavity and fulness of his language. His view of history was, nevertheless, like that of the Asiatics, who write to instruct and please. Now truly there is little that could instruct, and less that could please us, in the actions and speeches of barbarians, from among whom the kings alone come forth visibly. Delightful tales and apposite speeches are the best things you could devise; and many of these undoubtedly were current in the East, and were collected by Herodotus; some, it is probable, were invented by him. It is of no importance to the world, whether the greater part of historical facts, in such countries, be true or false; but they may be rendered of the highest, by the manner in which a writer of genius shall represent them. If history were altogether true, it would be not only un-

dignified but unsightly: great orators would often be merely the mouthpieces of prostitutes, and great captains would be hardly more than the gladiators of buffoons. The prime movers of those actions which appall and shake the world, are generally the vilest things in it; and the historian, if he discovers them, must conceal them or hold them back.

CALLISTHENES.

Pray tell me whether, since I left Athens, your literary men are busy.

ARISTOTELES.

More than ever . . as the tettinx chirps loudest in time of drought. Amongst them we have some excellent writers, and such as under Minerva will keep out the Persian tongue from the Piræus. Others are preferred to lucrative offices, are made ambassadors and salt-surveyors, and whatever else is most desirable to common minds, for proving the necessity of more effectual (such is always the preamble) and less changeful laws, such as those of the Medes and Indians. Several of these orators, whose granfathers were in a condition little better than servile, have had our fortunes and lives at their disposal, and are now declaiming on the advantages of what they call *regular govern-*

ment. You would suppose they mean that perfect order which exists when citizens rule themselves, and when every family is to the republic what every individual is to the family; a system of mutual zeal and mutual forbearance. No such thing: they mean a government with themselves at the head, and such as may ensure to them impunity for their treasons and peculations. One of them a short time ago was to consult with Metanyctius, a leading man among the Thracians, in what manner, and by what instalments, a sum of money, advanced to the latter by our republic, should be repaid. Metanyctius burst into a loud fit of laughter on reading the first words of the decree. *Dine with me,* said he, *and we will conclude the business when we are alone.* The dinner was magnificent; which in all such business is the best economy: few contractors or financiers can afford to give a plain one. *Your republic,* said Metanyctius, *is no longer able to enforce its claim; and we are as little likely to want your assistence in future, as you would be inclined to afford it. A seventh of the amount is at my disposal: you shall possess it. I shall enjoy about the same emolument for my fidelity to my worthy masters. The return of*

peace is so desirable, and regular government so divine a blessing, added to which, your countrymen are become of late so indifferent to inquiry into what the factions would call abuses, that, I pledge my experience, you will return amidst their acclamations and embraces.

Our negotiator became one of the wealthiest men in the world, although wealth is now accumulated in some families to such an amount, as our ancestors, even in the age of Crœsus or of Midas, would have deemed incredible. For wars drive up riches in heaps, as winds drive up snows, making and concealing many abysses.

Metanyctius was the more provident and the more prosperous of the two. I know not in what king's interest he was, but probably the Persian's; be this as it may, it was resolved for the sake of good *understanding* (another new expression) and good neighbourhood, to abolish the name of republic throughout the world. This appeared an easy matter. Our negotiator rejoiced in the promise exacted from him, to employ all his address in bringing about a thing so desirable: for *republic* sounded in his ears like *retribution.* It was then demanded that all laws should be abolished, and

that kings should govern at their sole discretion. This was better still, but more difficult to accomplish. He promised it however; and a large body of barbarian troops was raised in readiness to invade our territory, when the decree of Alexander reached the city, ordering that all the states both of Greece and Asia should retain their pristine laws. The conqueror had also found letters and accounts, which his loquacity would not allow him to keep secret; and our negotiator, whose opinion (a very common one) was, that exposure alone is ignominy, at last * * * * * * * * * * * *

CALLISTHENES.

Tell me, Aristoteles, for the question much interests me, are you happy in the midst of Macedonians, Illyrians, and other strange creatures, at which we wonder when we see their bodies and habiliments so like ours?

ARISTOTELES.

Dark reflections do occasionally come, as it were by stealth, upon my mind, but philosophy has power to dispell them. I care not whether the dog that defends my house and family be of the Laconian breed or the Molossian: if he steals my

bread or bites the hand that offers it, I strangle him or cut his throat, or engage a more dexterous man to do it, the moment I catch him sleeping.

CALLISTHENES.

The times are unfavorable to knowledge.

ARISTOTELES.

Knowledge and wisdom are different: we may know many new things without an encrease of wisdom; but it would be a contradiction to say that we can know any thing new without an encrease of knowledge. The knowledge that is to be acquired by communication, is intercepted or impeded by tyranny. I have lost an ibis or perhaps an hippopotamos by losing the favour of Alexander; he has lost an Aristoteles. He may deprive me of life; but in doing so, he must deprive himself of all that he has ever been contending for... of glory: and even a more reasonable man than he, will acknowledge that there is as much difference between life and glory, as there is between an ash-flake from the brow of Etna, and the untamable and eternal fires within its center. I may lose disciples: he may put me out of fashion; a tailor's lad can do as much. He may forbid the reading of my works; less than a tailor's lad can do that: idleness can do it, night can do it, sleep can do it,

a sunbeam rather too hot, a few hailstones, a few drops of rain, a call to dinner. By his wealth and power he might have afforded me opportunities of improving some branches of science, which I alone have cultivated with assiduity and success. Fools may make wise men wiser more easily than wise men can make them so. At all events, Callisthenes, I have prepared for myself a monument, from which perhaps some atoms may be detached by time, but which will retain its magnificence and the traces of its symmetry, when the substance and site of Alexander's shall be forgotten. Who knows but that the very ant-hill wheron I stand, may preserve its figure and contexture, when the sepulchre of this Macedonian shall be the solitary shed of some robber, or the manger of mules and camels! If I live I will leave behind me the history of our times, from the accession of Philip to the decease of Alexander.. for our comet must disappear soon; the moral order of the world requires it. How happy and glorious was Greece at the commencement of the period! how pestilential was the folly of those rulers, who rendered, by a series of idle irritations and untimely attacks, a patient for Anticyra, the arbiter of the universe!

I will now return with you to Plato, whose plan of government, by the indulgence of the gods, has lain hitherto on their knees.

CALLISTHENES.

I was unwilling to interrupt you, otherwise I should have remarked the bad consequences of excluding the poets from his commonwealth; not because they are in general the most useful members of it, but because we should punish a song more severely than a larceny. There are verses in Euripides such as every man utters who has the tooth-ache: and all expressions of ardent love have the modulation and emphasis of poetry. What a spheristerion is opened here to the exercise of informers! we should create more of these than we should drive out of poets. Judges would often be puzzled in deciding a criminal suit; for, before they could lay down the nature of the crime, they must ascertain what are the qualities and quantities of a dithyrambic. Now, Aristoteles, I suspect that even you cannot do this: for I observe in Pindar a vast variety of commutable feet, sonorous, it is true, in their cadences, but irregular and unrestricted. You avoid, as all good writers do carefully, whatever is dactylic, for the dactyl is the bindweed of prose, but I know not what other author has trimmed it with such frugal

and attentive husbandry*. One alone, in writing or conversation, would subject a man to violent suspicion of bad citizenship; and he who should employ it twice in a page or an oration, would be deemed so dangerous and desperate a malefactor, that it might be requisite to dig a pitfall or to lay an iron trap for him, or to noose him in his bed.

* The remark I attribute to Callisthenes on the freedom of Aristoteles from pieces of verse in his sentences is applicable to Plato, and surprisingly so, if we consider how florid and decorated is his language. Among the Romans T. Livius is the most abundant in them. Among the Greeks there is a curious instance in the prefatory words of Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Φύσεως δὴ νόμος ἅπασι κοινὸς, ὃν οὐδεὶς καταλύσει χρόνος, ἄρχειν ἀεὶ τῶν ἡττόνων τοὺς κρείττονας.

All these words appear to have been taken from some tragedy: the last constitute a perfect iambic; and the preceding, with hardly a touch, assume the same appearance: the diction too is quite poetical: *ἅπασι κοινὸς...καταλύσει*, &c.

Ἅπασι κοινός ἐστι τῆς φύσεως νόμος,
Ὃν...οὐδεὶς...καταλύσει χρόνος,
Ἄρχειν ἀεὶ τῶν ἡττόνων τοὺς κρείττονας.

The original must be very ancient: in the Gorgias of Plato is the same idea in nearly the same words; and as Plato was a great *spheterizer* (for borrowing and stealing, in speaking of philosophers, are indecorous terms), I rather think he took it from the poet than the poet from him.—*Δηλοῖ δὲ ταῦτα πολλαχοῦ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζωοῖς, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν ὅλαις ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ γένεσιν, ὅτι οὕτω τὸ δίκαιον κέκριται, τὸν κρείττω τοῦ ἥττονος ἄρχειν καὶ πλέον ἔχειν.* This law has not only been violated but reversed.

Throughout all your works there is certainly no sentence that has not an iambic in it; now our grammarians tell us that one is enough to make a verse, as one theft is enough to make a thief: an informer then has only to place it last in his bill of indictment, and not Minos himself could absolve you.

ARISTOTELES.

They will not easily take me for a poet.

CALLISTHENES.

Nor Plato for any thing else: he would be like a bee caught in his own honey.

ARISTOTELES.

I must remark to you, Callisthenes, that among the writers of luxuriant and florid prose, however rich and fanciful, there never was one who wrote good poetry. Imagination seems to start back when they would lead her into a narrower walk, and to forsake them at the first prelude of the lyre.

Plato has written much poetry, of which a few epigrams alone are remembered. He burned his iambics, but not until he found that they were thoroughly dry and withered. If ever a good poet should excell in prose, we, who know how distinct are the qualities, and how great must be the comprehension and the vigour that unites

them, shall contemplate him as an object of wonder, and almost of worship. This is remarkable in Plato: he is the only florid writer who is animated. He will always be ardently admired by those who have attained a considerable share of learning and little of precision; from the persuasion that they understand him, and that others do not; for men universally are ungrateful towards him who instructs them, unless in the hours or in the intervals of instruction he present a sweet cake to their self-love.

CALLISTHENES.

I never saw two men so different as you and he.

ARISTOTELES.

Yet many of those very sentiments in which we appear most at variance, can be drawn together until they meet. I had represented excessive wealth as the contingency most dangerous to a republic: he took the opposite side, and asserted that poverty is more so*. Now wherever there is excessive wealth, there is also in the train of it excessive poverty; as where the sun is brightest the shade is deepest. Many republics have stood for

* It is evident that Aristoteles wrote his Politica after Plato, for he alludes to a false opinion of Plato's in the proœmium: but many of the opinions must have been promulgated by both, long before the publication of their works.

ages, while no citizen of them was very rich, and while on the contrary most were very poor; but none hath stood so long, after that many, or indeed a few, have grown inordinately rich. Wealth causes poverty, then irritates it, then corrupts it; so that throughout its whole progress and action it is dangerous to the state. Plato defends his thesis with his usual ingenuity; for if there is nowhere a worse philosopher, there is hardly anywhere a better writer. He says, and truly, that the poor become wild and terrible animals, when they no longer can gain their bread by their trades and occupations; and that, laden to excess with taxes, they learn a lesson from Necessity which they never would have taken up without her. Upon this all philosophers, all men of common sense indeed, must think alike. Usually, if not always, the poor are quiet, while there is amongst them no apprehension of becoming poorer, that is, while the government is not oppressive and unjust: but the rich are often the most satisfied while the government is the most unjust and oppressive. In all civil dissensions we find the wealthy lead forth the idle and dissolute poor against the honest and industrious; and generally with success, because the numbers are

greater in calamitous times; because this party has ready at hand the means of equipment; because the young and active, never prone to reflection, are influenced more by the hope of a speedy fortune than by the calculation of a slower; and because there are few so firm and independent as not to rest willingly on patronage, or as not to preferr that of the most potent.

In writing on government we ought not only to search for what is best but for what is practicable. Plato has done neither, nor indeed has he searched at all, but instead of it, has thought it sufficient to stud a plain argument with an endless variety of bright and prominent topics. Now diversity of topics has not even the merit of invention in all cases; but he is the most inventive who finds most to say upon one subject, and renders all of it applicable and useful. Splendid things are the most easy to find and the most difficult to manage. If I order a bridle for my horse, and he of whom I order it brings me rich trappings in place of it, do I not justly deem it an importunate and silly answer to my remonstrances when he tells me that the trappings are more costly than the bridle?

Be assured, my Callisthenes, I speak not from

any disrespect to a writer so highly and so justly celebrated. I wish so extraordinary a man as he had been equally exempt from contemptuousness and malignity. We have conversed at other times on his conduct towards Xenophon, and indeed towards all the other more eminent disciples of Socrates. I had collected the documents on which I formed an exact account of all the most flourishing states, and of the manners, laws, and customs, by which they were so, being of opinion that no knowledge is so useful to a commonwealth as this. I had also, as you remember, drawn up certain rules for poetry, taking my examples from Homer principally, and from our great dramatists. Plato immediately forms a republic in the clouds, to overshadow all mine at once, and descends only to kick the poets through the streets. Homer, the chief object of my contemplation, is the chief object of his attack. I acknowledge that the lower and middle order of poets are in general the worst members of society; but the energies which exalt one to the higher, enable him not only to adorn but to protect his country. Plato says, the gods are degraded by Homer: yet Homer has omitted those light and ludicrous tales of them, which rather suit the manners of Plato than his. He

thought about the gods, I suspect, just as you and I do, and cared as little how Homer treated them; yet, with the prison of Socrates before his eyes, and his own Dialogues under them, he had the cruelty to cast forth this effusion against the mild Euripides. His souls and their occupancy of bodies are not to be spoken of with gravity, and, as I am inclined for the present to keep mine where it is, I will be silent on the subject.

CALLISTHENES.

I must inform you, my friend and teacher, that your Macedonian pupil is likely to interrupt your arrangements in that business. I am informed, and by those who are always credible in such assertions, that, without apologies, excuses, and prostrations, Aristoteles will follow the shades of Clitus and Parmenio. There is nothing of which Alexander is not jealous; no, not even eating and drinking. If any great work is to be destroyed, he must do it with his own hands. After he had burned down the palace of Cyrus, the glory of which he envied a strumpet, one Polemarchus thought of winning his favour by destroying the tomb: he wept for spite and hanged him. Those who are jealous of power, are so from a conscious-

ness of strength: those who are jealous of wisdom, are so from a consciousness of wanting it. Weakness has its fever... but you appear grave and thoughtful.

ARISTOTELES.

The barbarians no more interest me than a shoal of fishes.

CALLISTHENES.

I entertain the same opinion.

ARISTOTELES.

Of their rulers equally?

CALLISTHENES.

Yes, certainly; for amongst them there can be no other distinction than in titles and in dress. A Persian and a Macedonian, an Alexander and a Darius, if they oppress the liberties of Greece, are one.

ARISTOTELES.

Now, Callisthenes! if Socrates and Anytus were in the same chamber, if the wicked had mixed poison for the virtuous, the active in evil for the active in good, and some divinity had placed it in your power to present the cup to either, and, touching your head, should say, *This head also is devoted to the Eumenides if the choice be wrong*, what would you resolve?

CALLISTHENES.

To do that by command of the god which I would likewise have done without it.

ARISTOTELES.

Bearing in mind that a myriad of kings and conquerors is not worth the myriadth part of a wise and virtuous man, return, Callisthenes, to Babylon, and see that your duty be performed.

CONVERSATION XVIII.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

AND

HIS BROTHER QUINCTUS.



MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

AND

HIS BROTHER QUINCTUS.

MARCUS.

THE last calamities of our country, my brother Quinctus, have again united us; and something like the tenderness of earlier days appears to have returned, in the silence of ambition and in the subsidence of hope. It has frequently occurred to me how different we all are, from the moment when the parental roof bursts asunder, as it were, and the inmates are scattered abroad, and build up here and there new families. Many, who before lived in amity and concord, are then in the condition of those who, on receiving the intelligence of some shipwreck on the shore, collect together busily for plunder, and quarrel on touching the first fragment.

QUINCTUS.

We never disagreed on the division of any property, unless indeed the state and its honours may be considered as such; and although in regard to Cesar, our fortune drew us different ways latterly, you will remember my anxiety to procure you the consulate and the triumph. Our political views, Marcus, have always been similar, and generally the same. You indeed were somewhat more aristocratical and senatorial; and this prejudice has ruined both. As if the immortal Gods took a pleasure in confounding us by the difficulty of our choice, they placed the best men at the head of the worst cause. Decimus Brutus and Porcius Cato held up the train of Sylla; for the late civil wars were only a continuation of those which the old dictator seemed for a time to have extinguished, in blood and ruins. His faction was in authority when you first appeared at Rome: and although among your friends, and sometimes in public, you have spoken as a Roman should speak of C. Marius, a respect for Pompeius, the most insincere of men, made you silent on the merits of Sertorius; than whom there never was a better man in private life, a magistrate more upright, a general more vigilant, a citizen more

zealous for the prerogative of our republic. Caius Cesar, the later champion of the same party, overcame difficulties almost equally great, and, having acted upon a more splendid theatre, may perhaps appear at a distance a still greater character.

MARCUS.

He will seem so to those only, who place temperance and prudence, fidelity and patriotism, aside from the component parts of greatness. Cesar, of all men, knew best when to trust fortune: Sertorius never trusted her at all, nor marched a step along a path he had not explored. The best of Romans slew the one, the worst the other: the death of Cesar was that which the wise and virtuous would most deprecate for themselves and their children; that of Sertorius what they would most desire. And since, Quinctus, we have seen the ruin of our country, and her enemies are intent on ours, let us be grateful that the last years of life have neither been useless nor inglorious, and that it is likely to close, not under the condemnation of such citizens as Cato and Brutus, but as Lepidus and Antonius. It is with more sorrow than asperity that I reflect on Caius Cesar. O! had his heart been unambitious as his style, had he been as prompt to succour his country as to enslave her, how great, how in-

comparably great, were he! Then perhaps at this hour, O Quinctus, and in this villa, we should have enjoyed his humorous and erudite discourse; for no man ever tempered so seasonably and so justly the materials of conversation. How graceful was he! how unguarded! His whole character was uncovered; as we represent the bodies of heroes and of gods. Him I shall see again; and, while he acknowledges my justice, I shall acknowledge all his virtues and contemplate them unclouded. I shall see again our father, and Mutius Scevola, and you, and our sons, and the ingenuous and faithful Tyro. He alone has power over my life, if any has, for to him I confide my writings. And our worthy M. Brutus will meet me, whom I will embrace among the first; for if I have not done him an injury I have caused him one. Had I never lived, or had I never excited his envy, he might perhaps have written as I have done; but, for the sake of avoiding me, he caught both cold and fever. Let us pardon him; let us love him; with a weakness that injured his eloquence, and with a softness of soul that sapped the constitution of our state, he is still no unworthy branch of that family, which will be remembered the longest among men.

O happy day, when I shall meet my equals,

and when my inferiors shall trouble me no more!

Man thinks it miserable to be cut off in the midst of his projects; he should rather think it miserable to have formed them: for the one is his own action, the other is not; the one was subject from the beginning to disappointments and vexations, the other ends them. And what truly is that period of life in which we are not in the midst of our projects? They spring up only the more rank and wild, year after year, from their extinction or from their change of form, as herbage from the corruption and dying down of herbage. I will not dissemble that I upheld the senatorial cause, for no other reason than that my dignity was to depend on it. Had the opposite party been triumphant, and the senate been abolished, I should never have had a Catilinarian conspiracy to quell, and few of my orations would have been delivered. Without a senate what Verres?...

QUINCTUS.

Do you believe that the Marian faction would have annulled our order?

MARCUS.

I believe that their safety would have required its ruin, and that their vengeance, not to say their

equity, would have accomplished it. The civil war was of the senate against the equestrian order and the people, and was maintained by the wealth of the patricians, accumulated in the time of Sylla, by the proscription of all whom violence made, or avarice called, its adversaries. It would have been necessary to confiscate the whole property of the order, and to banish its members from Italy. Any measures short of these would have been inadequate to compensate the people for their losses, nor would there have been a sufficient pledge for the maintenance of tranquility. The exclusion of three hundred families from their estates, which they had acquired in great part by rapine, and their expulsion from a country which they had inundated with blood, would have prevented that partition-treaty, whereby are placed in the hands of three men the properties and lives of all.

There should in no government be a contrariety of interests. Checks are useful; but it is better to stand in no need of them. Bolts and bars are good things; but would you establish a college of thieves and robbers to try how good they are? Misfortune has taught me many truths, which a few years ago I should have deemed suspicious and dangerous. The fall of Rome and of Carthage, the form of whose governments was almost

the same, has been occasioned by the divisions of the ambitious in their senates: for we conscript fathers call that ambition which the lower ranks call avarice: in fact the only difference is, that the one wears fine linen, the other coarse; one covets the government of Asia, the other a flask of vinegar. The people were indifferent which side prevailed, until their houses, in that country were reduced to ashes, in this were delivered to murderers and gamesters.

QUINCTUS.

Painful is it to reflect, that the greatness of nearly all men originates from what has been taken by fraud or violence out of the common stock. The greatness of states, on the contrary, depends on the subdivision of property, chiefly of the landed, in very moderate portions; on the frugal pay of all functionaries, chiefly of those who possess a property; and on unity of interests and designs in all classes. Where provinces are allotted, not for the public service, but for the enrichment of private families, where consuls wish one thing and tribunes wish another, how can there be prosperity or safety? If Carthage, whose government (as you observe) much resembled ours, had allowed the same rights to all the inhabitants of Africa, had she been as zealous in civilizing as

in coercing them, she would have ruined our commonwealth and ruled the world. Rome found all the rest of Italy more cultivated than herself, but corrupted for the greater part by luxury, ignorant of military science, and more patient of slavery than of toil. She conquered; and in process of time infused into them somewhat of her spirit, and imparted to them somewhat of her institutions. Nothing was then wanting to her policy, but only to grant voluntarily what she might have foreseen they would unite to enforce, and to have constituted a social body in Italy. This would have rendered her invincible. Ambition would not permitt our senators to divide with others the wealth and aggrandisement arising from authority: and hence our worst citizens are become our rulers. The same error was committed by Sertorius, but from purer principles. He created a senate in Spain, but admitted no Spaniard. The practise of disinterestedness, the force of virtue, in despite of so grievous an affront, united to him the bravest and most honorable of nations. If he had granted to them what was theirs by nature, and again due to them for benefits, he would have had nothing else to regrett, than that they had so often broken our legions, and covered our commanders with shame.

MARCUS.

The moral like the physical body has not always the same wants in the same degree. We put off or on a greater or less quantity of cloathes, according to the season; and it is to the season that we must accommodate ourselves in government, wherin there are only a few leading principles which are never to be disturbed. I now perceive that the laws of society in one thing resemble the laws of perspective: they require that what is below should rise gradually, and that what is above should descend in the same proportion, but not that they should touch. Still less do they inform us, what is echoed in our ears by new masters from camp and schoolroom, that the wisest and best should depend on the weakest and worst; or that, when individuals, however ignorant of moral discipline and impatient of self-restraint, are deemed adequate to the management of their affairs at twenty years, a state should never be so; that boys should come out of pupilage, that men should return to it; that people in their actions and abilities so contemptible as the triumvirate, should become by their own appointment our tutors and guardians, and shake their scourges over Marcus Brutus, Marcus Varro, Marcus Tullius. The Romans are hastening back, I see, to the

government of absolute kings, whether by that name or another is immaterial, which no virtuous and dignified man, no philosopher of whatever sect, has recommended, approved, or tolerated, and than which no moralist, no fabulist, no visionary, no poet, satirical or comic, no Fescennine jester, no dwarf or eunuch (the most privileged of privileged classes), no runner at the side of a triumphal car, in the utmost extravagance of his licentiousness, has imagined any thing more absurd, more indecorous, or more insulting. What else indeed is the reason why a nation is called barbarous by the Greeks and us? This alone stamps the character upon it, standing for whatever is monstrous, for whatever is debased.

What a shocking sight should we consider an old father of a family, led in chains along the public street, with boys and prostitutes shouting after him! and should we not retire from it quickly and anxiously? A sight greatly more shocking now presents itself: an ancient nation is reduced to slavery, by those who vowed, before the people and before the altars, to defend her. And is it hard for us, O Quinctus, to turn away our eyes from this abomination? or is it necessary for a Gaul or an Illyrian to command us that we close them on it?

I am your host, my brother, and must recall you to pleasanter ideas. How beautiful is this Formian coast! how airy this villa! Ah whither have I called back your reflections! it is the last of ours perhaps we may ever see. Do you remember the races of our children along the sands, and their consternation when Tyro cried "*the Læstrygons! the Læstrygons!*" He little thought he prophesied in his mirth, and all that poetry has feigned of these monsters should in so few years be accomplished. The other evening, an hour or two before sunset, I sailed quietly along the coast, for there was little wind, and the stillness on shore made my heart faint within me. I remembered how short a time ago I had conversed with Cato in the walks around the villa of Lucullus, whose son, such was the modesty of the youth, followed rather than accompanied us. There is something of softness, not unallied to sorrow, in these mild winter days and their humid sunshine. I know not, Quinctus, by what train or connection of ideas they lead me rather to the past than to the future; unless it be that, when the fibres of our bodies are relaxed, as they must be in such weather, the spirits fall back easily upon reflection, and are slowly incited to expectation. The memory of those great men, who con-

solidated our republic by their wisdom, exalted it by their valour, protected and defended it by their constancy, stands not alone nor idly: they draw us after them, they place us with them. O Quinctus! I wish I could impart to you my firm persuasion, that after death we shall enter into their society: and what matters if the place of our reunion be not the capitol or the forum, be not Elysian meadows or Atlantic islands? Locality has nothing to do with mind once free. Carry this thought perpetually with you, and death, whether you believe it terminates our whole existence or otherwise, will lose, I will not say its terrors, for the brave and wise have none, but its anxieties and inquietudes.

QUINCTUS.

Brother, when I see that many dogmas in religion have been invented to keep the intellect in subjection, I may fairly doubt the rest.

MARCUS.

Yes, if any emolument be derived from them to colleges of priests. But surely he deserves the dignity and the worship of a god, who first instructed men that by their own volition they might enjoy eternal happiness; that the road to it is most easy and most beautiful, such as any one would take by preference, even if nothing

desirable were at the end of it. Neither to give nor take offence, are surely the two things most delightful in human life: and it is by these two things that eternal happiness may be attained. We shall enjoy a future state accordingly as we have employed our intellect and our affections. Perfect bliss can be expected by few; but still fewer will be so miserable as they have been here.

QUINCTUS.

A belief to the contrary, if we admitt a future life, would place the gods beneath us in their best properties, justice and beneficence.

MARCUS.

Belief in a future life is the appetite of reason; and I see not why we should not gratify it as unreluctantly as the baser. Religion does not call upon us to believe all the fables of the vulgar, but on the contrary to correct them.

QUINCTUS.

Otherwise, overrun as we are in Rome by foreners of all nations, and ready to receive, as we have been, the buffooneries of Syrian and Egyptian priests, our citizens may within a few years become not only the dupes, but the tributaries, of these impostors. The Syrian may scourge us until we join him in his lamentation of Adonis;

and the Egyptian may tell us that it is unholy to eat a chicken, and holy to eat an egg; while a sly rogue of Judæa whispers in our ear, "*That is superstition: you go to heaven if you pay me a tenth of your harvests.*" This, I have heard Cn. Pompeius relate, is done in Judæa.

MARCUS.

Yes, but the tenth paid all the expenses both of civil government and religious; for the magistracy was (if such an expression can be repeated with seriousness) *theocratical.* In time of peace a decimation of property would be intolerable; but the Jews have been always at war, natives of a sterile country and neighbours of a fertile one, acute, meditative, melancholy, morose. I know not whether we ourselves have performed such actions as they have, or whether any nation has fought with such resolution and pertinacity. We laugh at their worship; they abominate ours: in this I think we are the wiser; for surely on speculative points it is better to laugh than to abominate. But whence have you brought your eggs and chickens? I have heard our Varro tell many stories about the Egyptian ordinances, but I do not remember this.

QUINCTUS.

Indeed the distinction seems a little too absurd

even for the worshippers of cats and crocodiles. Perhaps I may have wronged them: the nation I may indeed have forgotten, but I am certain of the fact. I place it in the archives of superstition; you may deposit it in its right cell. Some eastern nations are so totally subjected to the priesthood, that a member of it is requisite at birth, at death, and, by Thalassius! at marriage itself: he can even inflict pains and penalties, he can oblige you to tell him all the secrets of the heart, he can call your wife to him, your daughter to him, your blooming and innocent son; he can absolve from sin; he can exclude from pardon.

MARCUS.

Now, Quinctus, egg and chicken, cat and crocodile, disappear and vanish: you repeat impossibilities: mankind, in its lowest degradation, has never been depressed so low. The savage would strangle the impostor that attempted it, the civilized man would scourge him and hiss him from society. Come, come, brother! we may expect such a state of things whenever we find united the genius of the Cimmerian and the courage of the Troglodyte. Religions wear out, cover them with gold or case them with iron, as you will. Jupiter is now less powerful in Crete than when he was in his cradle there, and spreads

fewer terrors at Dodona than a shepherd's cur. Proconsuls have removed from Greece, from Asia, from Sicily, the most celebrated statues; and it is doubted at last whether those deities are in heaven whom a cart and a yoke of oxen have carried away on earth. When the civil wars are over, and the minds of men become indolent and inactive, as is always the case after great excitement, it is not improbable that some novelties may be attempted in religion: but, as my prophesies in the course of all the late events have been accomplished, so you may believe me when I prognosticate that our religion, although it should be disfigured and deteriorated, will continue in many of its features, in many of its pomps and ceremonies, the same. Sibylline books will never be wanting, while fear and curiosity are inherent in the composition of man. And there is something consolatory in this idea: for whatever be your philosophy, you must acknowledge that it is pleasant to think, although you know not wherefor, that, when we go away, things visible, as things also intellectual, will remain in great measure as we left them. A slight displeasure would be felt by us, if we were certain that after our death our houses would be taken down, though not only no longer inhabited by us, but probably not destined

to remain in the possession of our children; and that even these vineyards, fields, and gardens, were about to assume another aspect.

QUINCTUS.

The sea and the barren rocks will remain for ever as they are: whatever is lovely changes. Misrule and slavery may convert our fertile plains into pestilential marshes; and whoever shall exclame against the authors and causes of such devastation, may be proscribed, slain, or exiled. Enlightened and virtuous men, painfullest of thoughts! may condemn him: for a love of security accompanies a love of study, and that by degrees is adulation which was acquiescence. Cruel men have always at their elbow the supporters of arbitrary power; and although the cruel are seldom solicitous in what manner they may be represented to posterity, yet, if any one amongst them be rather more so than is customary, some projector will whisper in his ear an advice like this. "Oppress, fine, imprison, and torture, those who (you have reason to suspect) are or may be philosophers or historians: so that, if they mention you at all, they will mention you with indignation and abhorrence. Your object is attained: few will implicitly believe them; almost all will acknowledge that their faith should be suspected, as there are

proofs that they wrote in irritation. This is better than if they spoke of you slightingly, or cursorily, or evasively. By employing a hangman extraordinary, you purchase in perpetuity the title of a clement prince."

MARCUS.

Quinctus, you make me smile, by bringing to my recollection that, among the marauders of Pindenissus, was a fellow called by the Romans Fœdirupa, from a certain resemblance no less to his name than to his character. He commanded in a desert and sandy district, which his father and granfather had enlarged by violence; for all the family had been robbers and assassins. Several schools had once been established in those parts, remote from luxury and seduction, and several good and learned men taught in them, having fled from Mithridates. Fœdirupa assumed on a sudden the air and demeanour of a patriot, and hired one Gentius to compose his rhapsodies on the love of our country, with liberty to promise what he pleased. Gentius put two hundred pieces of silver on his mule, rode to the schools, exhibited his money, and promised the same gratuity to every scholar who would arm and march forth against the enemy. The teachers breathed a free and pure spirit, and, although they well knew the

knavery of Gentius, seconded him in his mission. Gentius, as was ordered, wrote down the names of those who repeated the most frequently that of country, and the least so that of Fœdirupa. Even rogues are restless for celebrity. The scholars performed great services against the enemy: on their return they were disarmed; the promises of Fœdirupa were disavowed; the teachers were thrown into prison, accused of violating the ancient laws, of perverting the moral and religious principles, and finally of abusing the simplicity of youth, by illusory and empty promises. Gentius drew up against them the bills of indictment, and offered to take care of their libraries and cellars while they remained in prison. Fœdirupa cast them all into dungeons; but, drawing a line of distinction much finer than the most subtile of them had ever done, *I will not kill them,* said he; *I will only frighten them to death.* He became at last rather less cruel...and starved them. Only one was sentenced to lose his head: Gentius comforted him upon the scaffold, by reminding him how much worse he would have fared under Mithridates, who would not only have commanded his head to be cut off, but also to be carried on a pike, and by assuring him that, instead of such wanton barbarity, he himself would carry it to

the widow and her children, within an hour after their conference at farthest. The last words moved him little; he hardly heard them: his heart and his brain throbbed in agony at the sound of children, of widow. He threw his head back; tears rolled over his temples, and dripped from his grey hair. *Ah my dear friend,* said Gentius, *have I unwittingly touched a tender part? be manful; dry your eyes; the children are yours no longer; why be concerned for what you can never see again? My good old friend,* added he, *how many kind letters to me has this ring of yours sealed formerly!* then, lifting up the hand, he drew it slowly off, overcome by an excess of grief, through which it fell into his bosom, and to moderate which he was forced to run away, looking as he fled through the corner of his eye at the executioner, who seemed to grudge his escape. The rogue was stoned to death by those he had betrayed, not long before my arrival in the province; and an arrow from an unseen hand did justice on Fœdirupa.

I return amidst these home scenes.

On the promontory of Misenus is yet standing the mansion of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi; and, whether from reverence of her virtues and exalted name, or that the Gods preserve it as a

monument of womanhood, its exterior is unchanged. Here she resided many years, and never would be induced to revisit Rome after the murder of her younger son. She cultivated a variety of flowers, and naturalized several plants, and brought together trees from vale and mountain, trees unproductive of fruit, but affording her, in their superintendence and management, a tranquil and expectant pleasure. We read that the Babylonians and Persians were formerly much addicted to similar places of recreation. I have no knowledge in these matters*; and the first time I went thither, I asked many questions of the gardener's boy, a child about nine years old. He thought me still more ignorant than I was, and said, among other such remarks, *I do not know what they call this plant at Rome, or whether they have it there; but it is among the commonest here, beautiful as it is, and we call it cytisus.*

Thank you, child! said I smiling; and, pointing towards two cypresses, *pray, what do you call those high and gloomy trees, at the extremity of the avenue, just above the precipice?*

* Cicero in a letter to his brother says, Item de hortis quod me admones, nec fui unquam valde cupidus, et nunc domus suppeditat mihi hortorum amœnitatem. Ad Q. Fratr. l. 3. ep. 4.

Others like them, replied he, *are called cypresses; but these, I know not why, have always been called Tiberius and Caius.*

QUINCTUS.

Of all studies the most delightful and the most useful is biography. The seeds of great events lie near the surface; historians delve too deep for them. No history was ever true: but lives I have read which, if they were not so, had the appearance, the interest, and the utility of truth.

MARCUS.

I have collected facts about Cornelia, worth recording; and I would commemorate them the rather, as, while the Greeks have had amongst them no few women of abilities, we can hardly mention two.

QUINCTUS.

Yet ours have advantages which theirs had not. Did Cornelia die unrepining and contented?

MARCUS.

She was firmly convinced to the last, that an agrarian law would have been both just and beneficial; and was consoled that her illustrious sons had discharged at once the debt of nature and of patriotism. Glory is a light that shines from us on others, and not from others on us. She was

assured that future ages would render justice to the memory of her children; but she thought they had already received the highest approbation when they had received their own. If anything still was wanting, their mother gave it.

Your remark on the preeminence of biography over history is just; and yet how far below the truth is even the best written representation of those upon whose minds the Gods or the Muses vouchsafe to descend! How much greater would the greatest man appear, if any one about him could perceive those innumerable filaments of thought, which break as they arise from the brain, and the slenderest of which is worth all the wisdom of many, at whose discretion lies the felicity of nations! This in itself is impossible; but there are fewer who consider and contemplate what comes in sight, as it were, and disappears again (such is the conversation of the wise), than who calculate those stars that are now coming forth above us: scarcely one in several millions can apportion, to what is exalted in mind, its magnitude, place, and distance. We must be contented to be judged by that which people can discern and handle: that which they can have amongst them most at leisure, is most likely to be well examined and duly estimated. Whence I am led to believe

that my writings, and those principally which instruct men in their rights and duties, will obtain me a solider and more extensive reputation than I could have acquired in public life, by busier and harder and more anxious labours. Public men appear to me to live in that delusion, which, Socrates in the *Phædo* would persuade us, is common to all our species. *We live in holes,* says he, *and fancy that we are living in the highest parts of the earth.* What he says physically, I would say morally: judge whether my observation is not at least as reasonable as his hypothesis; and indeed, to speak ingenuously, whether I have not converted what is physically false and absurd into what is morally true and important.

QUINCTUS.

True, beyond a question, and important as those whom it concerns will let it be. They who stand in high stations, wish for higher; but they who have occupied the highest of all, often think with regret of some more pleasant one which they have left below. Servius Tullius, a prudent man, dedicated to Fortune what we call the narrow temple, with a statue in proportion, expressing, no doubt, his idea, that Fortune in the condition of mediocrity is more reasonably than in any other the object of our vows. He could have given her

as magnificent a name and as magnificent a residence as any she possesses; you know she has many of both: but he wished perhaps to try whether for once she would be as favorable to wisdom as to enterprise*.

MARCUS.

If life allows us time for the experiment, let us also try it†.

I have performed one action, I have composed some few things, which posterity, I would fain

* Plutarch, in his *Problems*, offers several reasons, all different from this.

† That Cicero in his later days began to think a private life preferable to a public, and that his philosophical no less than his political opinions were unstable, is shewn in few places so evidently and remarkably, as in the eighth book of his epistles.

"Nam omnem nostram de republicâ curam, cogitationem de dicendâ in senatu sententiâ, &c., abjecimus, et in Epicuri nos, adversarii nostri, castra, conjecimus."

Demosthenes in his later days entertained the same opinion. He said that, if there were two roads, the one leading to government, the other to death, a prudent man would choose the latter.

The most wonderful thing in human nature is the variance of knowledge and will, where no passion is the stimulant; whence that system of life is often chosen and persevered in, which a man is well convinced is neither the best for him nor the easiest. Every action must have its motive; but weak motives are sufficient for weak minds; and whenever we see one which we believed a stronger moved habitually by what appears inadequate, we may be certain that there is, to bring a metaphor from the forest, more top than root.

believe, will not suffer to be quite forgotten. Fame, they tell you, is air; but without air, there is no life for any; without fame, there is none for the best. And yet, who knows whether all our labours and vigils may not at last be involved in oblivion! What treasures of learning must have perished, which existed long before the time of Homer! For it is utterly out of the nature of things, that the first attempt in any art or science should be the most perfect: such is the Iliad. I look upon it as the sole fragment of a lost world. Grieved indeed I should be to think, as you have heard me say before, that an enemy might possess our city five thousand years hence; yet when I consider that soldiers of all nations are in the armies of the triumvirate, and that all are more zealous for her ruin than our citizens are for her defence, this event is not unlikely the very next. The worst of barbarism is that which arises, not from the absence of laws, but from their corruption. So long as virtue stands merely on the same level with vice, nothing is amiss; few governments in their easy decrepitude care for more; but when rectitude is dangerous and depravity secure, then eloquence and courage, the natural pride and safeguard of states, become the strongest and most active instruments in their overthrow.

QUINCTUS.

I see the servants have lighted the lamps in the house earlier than usual, hoping, I suppose, we shall retire to rest in good time, that tomorrow they may prepare the festivities for your birthday. Within how few minutes has the night closed in upon us! nothing is left discernible of the promontories, or the long irregular breakers under them: we have before us only a faint glimmering from the shells in our path, and from the blossoms of the arbutus.

MARCUS.

The Circean hills, and the island of Parthenope, and even the white rocks of Anxur, are become undistinguishable. We leave our Cato and our Lucullus, we leave Cornelia and her children, the scenes of friendship and the recollections of greatness, for Lepidus and Octavius and Antonius; and who knows whether this birthday*, between

* It never came: Cicero was murdered on the nineteenth of January, the eve of his birthday, by the *holy allies* of that age; among whom however none broke his promise to the supporters of his power; none disowned the debts he had contracted to redeem himself from slavery; none sold rotten ships for sound; none employed the assassins of his father; none prostituted his daughter; none proclaimed that he had no occasion for liberal and learned men; none proscribed the party by which his life was saved and his authority esta-

which and us only one other day intervenes, may not be, as it certainly will be the least pleasurable, the last!

If life is a present, which any one, foreknowing its contents, would have willingly declined, does it not follow that any one would as willingly give it up, having well tried what they are? I speak of the wise and reasonable, the firm and virtuous, not of those who, like bad governors, are afraid of laying down the powers and privileges they have been proved unworthy of holding. Were it certain that, the longer we live, the wiser we become and the happier, then indeed a long life would be desirable; but since on the contrary our mental strength decays, and our enjoyments of every kind not only sink and cease, but diseases and sorrows come in place of them, if any wish is wise, it is surely the wish that we should go away, unshaken by years, undepressed by griefs, and undespoiled of our better faculties. Life and death appear more certainly ours than whatsoever else: and yet hardly can that be called so, which comes without our knowledge and goes without it; or

blished; none called cowardice decent order, perfidy right reason, or cruelty true religion. Yet they were rather bad men in their day, at least the losers.

that which we cannot put aside if we would, and indeed can anticipate but little. The former there are few who can regulate in any way, none who can order what it shall receive or exclude. What value then should be placed upon it by the wise, when duty or necessity calls him away? or what reluctance should he feel on passing into a state, where at least he must be conscious of fewer checks and inabilities? Such, my brother, as the brave commander, when from the secret and dark passages of some fortress, wherein implacable enemies besieged him, having performed all his duties and exhausted all his munition, he issues at a distance into open day.

Every thing has its use; life to teach us the contempt of death, and death the contempt of life. Glory, which among all things between stands eminently the principal object, although it has been considered by some philosophers as mere vanity and deception, moves those great intellects which nothing else could have stirred, and places them where they can best and most advantageously serve the commonwealth. Occasion may have been wanting to some; I grant it: they may have remained their whole lifetime, like dials in the shade, always fit for use and always useless; but this must occurr either in monarchal governments,

or where persons occupy the first stations who ought hardly to have been admitted to the secondary, and whom Jealousy has guided more frequently than Justice.

It is true there is much inequality, much inconsiderateness, in the distribution of fame. The principles, according to which honour ought to be conferred, are not only violated, but often inverted. Whoever wishes to be thought great among men, must do them some great mischief. The longer he continues in doing things of this sort, the more he will be admired. The features of Fortune are so like those of Genius as to be mistaken by almost all the world. We whose names and works are honorable to our country, and destined to survive her, are less esteemed than those who have accelerated her decay; yet even here the sense of injury rises from and is accompanied by a sense of merit, the tone of which is deeper and predominant.

When we have spoken of life, death, and glory, we have spoken of all important things, except friendship: for eloquence and philosophy, and other inferior attainments, are either means conducible to life and glory, or antidotes against the bitterness of death. We cannot conquer fate and necessity, but we can yield to them in such a

manner as to be greater than if we could. I have observed your impatience: you were about to appeal in favour of virtue: but virtue is included in friendship, as I have mentioned in my Lælius, nor have I ever separated it from philosophy or from glory. On friendship, in the present condition of our affairs, I would say little. Could I begin my existence again, and, what is equally impossible, could I see before me all I have seen, I would choose few acquaintances, fewer friendships, no familiarities. This rubbish, for such it generally is, collecting at the base of an elevated mind, lessens its highth and impairs its character. What requires to be sustained, if it is greater, falls; if it is smaller, is lost to view by the intervention of its supporters*.

* These are the ideas of a man deceived and betrayed by almost every one he trusted. But if Cicero had considered, as I have often done, that there never was an elevated soul or warm heart since the creation of the world, which has not been ungenerously and unjustly dealt with, and that ingratitude has usually been in a fair proportion to desert, his vanity if not his philosophy would have buoyed up and supported him. He himself is the most remarkably rich and redundant in such instances. To set Pompey aside, as a man ungrateful to all, he had spared Julius Cesar in his consulate, when, according to the suspicions of History, he was implicated in the conspiracy of Catiline. Clodius, Lepidus, and Antonius, had been admitted to his friendship and confidence: Octavius owed to him his popularity and estimation: Philologus, whom he had fed and

I contemplate with satisfaction the efforts I have made to serve my country: but the same eloquence, the merit of which not even the most barbarous of my adversaries can detract from me, would have enabled me to elucidate large fields of philosophy, hitherto untrodden by our countrymen, and in which the Greeks have wandered widely or worked unprofitably.

QUINCTUS.

Excuse my interruption. I heard a few days ago a pleasant thing reported of Asinius Pollio. He said at supper, your language is that of an Allobrox.

MARCUS.

After supper, I should rather think, and with Antonius. Asinius, urged by the strength of instinct, picks from amidst the freshest herbage the dead and dry thistle, and doses and dreams about it where he cannot find it... Acquired, it is true, I have a certain portion of my knowledge, and consequently of my language, from the Allobroges: I cannot well point out the place; the walls of Romulus, the habitations of Janus and of

instructed, pointed out to his murderers the secret path he had taken to avoid them: and Popilius, their leader, had by his eloquence been saved from the punishment of one parricide that he might committ another.

Saturn, and the temple of Capitoline Jove, which the confessions I extorted from their ambassadors gave me in my consulate the means of saving, stand at too great a distance from this terrace.

QUINCTUS.

To leave behind us our children, if indeed they will be permitted to stay behind, is painful.

MARCUS.

Among all the contingencies of life, it is that for which we ought to be the best prepared, as the most regular and ordinary in the course of nature. We bequeathe to ours a field illuminated by our glory and enriched by our example: a noble patrimony, and beyond the jurisdiction of Prætor or proscriber. Nor indeed is our fall itself without its fruit to them: for violence is the cause why that is often called a calamity which is not so, and repairs in some measure its injuries by exciting to commiseration and tenderness. The pleasure a man receives from his children resembles that which with more propriety than any other we may attribute to the Divinity: for to suppose that his chief satisfaction and delight should arise from the contemplation of what he has done or can do, is to place him on a level with a runner or a wrestler. The formation of a world, or of a thousand worlds, is as easy to him as the formation

of an atom. Virtue and intellect are equally his production; but he subjects them in no slight degree to our volition. His benevolence is gratified at seeing us conquer our wills and rise superior to our infirmities; and at tracing day after day a nearer resemblance in our moral features to his. We can derive no pleasure but from exertion; he can derive none from it; since exertion, as we understand the word, is incompatible with omnipotence.

QUINCTUS.

Proceed my brother. In all temptations of mind and feeling, my spirits are equalized by your discourse; and that which you said with rather too much brevity of our children, soothes me greatly.

MARCUS.

I am persuaded of the truth in what I have spoken. And yet—ah Quinctus! there is a tear that Philosophy cannot dry, and a pang that will rise as we approach the Gods.

They, who have given us our affections, permitt us surely the uses and the signs of them. Immoderate grief, like every thing else immoderate, is useless and pernicious; but if we did not tolerate, and endure it, if we did not prepare for it, meet it, commune with it, if we did not even cherish

it in its season, much of what is best in our faculties, much of our tenderness, much of our generosity, much of our patriotism, much also of our genius would be stifled and extinguished.

When I hear any one call upon another to be manly and to restrain his tears, if they flow from the social and the kind affections, I doubt the humanity and distrust the wisdom of the counseler. If he were humane, he would be more inclined to pity and to sympathize than to lecture and to reprove; and if he were wise, he would consider that tears are given us by nature as a remedy to affliction, although, like other remedies, they should come to our relief in private. Philosophy, we may be told, would prevent the tears by turning away the sources of them, and by raising up a rampart against pain and sorrow. I am of opinion that Philosophy, quite pure and totally abstracted from our appetites and passions; instead of serving us the better for being so, would do us little or no good at all. We may receive so much light as not to see, and so much philosophy as to be worse than foolish.

My eloquence, whatever (with Pollio's leave) it may be, would at least have sufficed me to explore these tracts of philosophy, which the Greeks, as I said, either have seldom coasted or have left un-

settled. Although I think I have done somewhat more than they have, I am often dissatisfied with the scantiness of my stores and the limits of my excursions. Every question has given me the subject of a new one; the last has always been better than the preceding, and, like Archimedes, whose tomb appears now before me as when I first discovered it at Syracuse, I could almost ask of my enemy time to solve my problem.

Quinctus! Quinctus! let us exult with joy: there is no enemy to be appeased or avoided. We are moving forwards, and without exertion, thither where we shall know all we wish to know, and how greatly more than, whether in Tusculum or in Formiæ, in Rome or in Athens, we could ever hope to learn!

Some of the opinions attributed to Cicero in this dialogue, and particularly those on the agrarian law, are at variance with what he has expressed, not only in his orations, but also in his three books *De Officiis,* which he appears to have written under a strong fear that either this or something similar would deprive him of his possessions. Hence he speaks of the Gracchi with an asperity which no historian has countenanced, and of Agis, the most virtuous king on record, without a word of commendation or of pity. When however he perceived that in the midst of dangers his property was untouched, it must have occurred to so sagacious a reasoner,

that, if an agrarian law had been enacted, the first triumvirate could never have existed, and that he himself had remained, as he ought to have been, the leader of the commonwealth. It is to be lamented, but it is also to be pardoned in him, that with such feelings he should have mentioned Crassus as a man whom he did not hate, and should have spoken of Cesar thus: Tanta in eo peccandi libido fuit, ut hoc ipsum eum delectaret, peccare. Yet Cesar after the battle of Pharsalia did evil from necessity, good from choice; and then as little evil as was possible, and more good than was politic. Of Crassus, whom he *did not hate*, he says... Qui videt domi tuæ pariter accusatorum atque judicum consociatos greges, qui nocentes et pecuniosos reos eodem te auctore corruptelam judicii molientes, qui tuas mercedum pactiones in patrociniis, intercessiones pecuniarum in coitionibus candidatorum, dimissiones libertorum ad fœnerandas diripiendasque provincias; qui expulsiones vicinorum; qui latrocinia in agris; qui cum servis, cum libertis, cum clientibus societates; qui possessiones vacuas; qui proscriptiones locupletum; qui cædes municipiorum; qui illam Sullani temporis messem recordetur; qui testamenta subjecta, qui sublatos tot homines, qui denique omnia venalia, delectum, decretum, alienam, suam sententiam, forum, domum, vocem, silentium.

The description of such a state is sufficient to recommend its abolition. He illustrates it further. Desitum est videri quidquam in socios iniquum, cum extitisset etiam in cives tanta crudelitas... Multa præterea commemorarem nefaria in socios, si hoc uno sol quidquam vidisset indignius... Optimatibus tuis nihil confido. Sed video nullam esse rempublicam, nullum senatum, nulla judicia, nullam in ullo nostrûm dignitatem... Jure igitur plectimur: nisi enim multorum impunita scelera tulissemus, &c.... Non igitur utilis illa L. Philippi Q. filii sententia, quas civitates L. Sulla *pecuniâ acceptâ ex SC. liberavisset*, ut hæ rursus vectigales essent, neque his pecuniam quam pro libertate dedissent redderemus: turpe imperio! piratarum enim melior fides quam senatûs. It follows then, à fortiori, that if pirates should be destroyed, the senate should.

Cicero never entertained long together the same opinion of Pompey: a little before the death of Clodius he writes thus. Pompeius, *nostri amores*, quod mihi summo dolori est, ipse se afflixit. Soon after thus. Pompeius a me valde contendit de reditu in gratiam; sed adhuc nihil profecit, nec, si ullam partem libertatis tenebo, proficiet. He speaks of him to Atticus as follows. Non mihi satis idonei sunt auctores ii qui a te probantur; quod enim unquam in republicâ forte factum extitit? aut quis ab iis ullam rem laude dignam *desiderat*? nec mehercule laudandos existimo qui trans mare belli parandi causâ profecti sunt... Quis autem est tantâ quidem de re quin variè secum ipse disputet? Simul et elicere cupio sententiam tuam; si manet, ut firmior sim, si mutata est, ut tibi assentiar... The character and designs of Pompey and his *legitimates* are developed thus. Mirandum in modum Cneius noster Sullani regni similitudinem concupivit. Consilium est suffocare urbem et Italiam fame; deinde agros vastare, urere. Promitto tibi, si valebit, tegulam illum in Italiâ nullam relicturum. Mene igitur socio? contra mehercule meum judicium, et contra omnium antiquorum auctoritatem... Quæ minæ municipiis! quæ nominatim viris bonis! quæ denique omnibus qui remansissent! quàm crebrò illud, *Sulla potuit, ego non potero.*

The conduct of the Gracchi was approved by the wisest and most honest of their contemporaries. Lælius, the friend of Scipio, desisted from his support of Tiberius, only when, as Plutarch says, he was compelled by the apprehension of *greater evil.* But surely a man so prudent as Lælius must have foreseen all the consequences, and have known the good or the evil of them, and would not have desisted when, the matter having been agitated, and the measure agreed on, every danger was over from taking it, and the only one that could arise was from its rejection, after that the hopes and expectations of the people had been stimulated and excited. Hence I am induced to believe that Scipio, in compliance with the wishes of the senate, persuaded his friend to desist from the undertaking. Cicero, in mentioning it, expresses himself in these words...

Duo sapientissimos et clarissimos fratres, Publium Crassum et Publium Scævolam, aiunt Tiberio Graccho *auctores legum* fuisse, alterum quidem, ut videmus, palam, alterum, ut suspicamur, obscurius. Acad. Quæst. iv. Mutianus Crassus, the brother of Publius, and Appius Claudius, were also his supporters. It is beyond all doubt that he was both politic and equitable in his plan of dividing among the poorer citizens, whose debts had been incurred by services rendered to their country, the lands retained by the rich, in violation of the Licinian law. He was called unjust towards the inhabitants of Latium and the allies, in proposing to deprive them of that which the Romans had given them, but instead of which, to indemnify themselves for the grant, they had imposed a tribute. Gracchus wished to allay the irritation of the people, and to render them inoffensive to the state, by giving them useful occupations in the cares and concerns of property. The Latins and allies would have been indemnified: for the tax imposed on them would have been removed, and the freedom of the city granted to them. The senate would perhaps have been somewhat less hostile to Gracchus, if he had not also proposed that the money left by Attalus to the Roman people should go to its destination. They were stimulated, if not by interest, by power, to invoke the assistence of Scipio against the popular party; and he was conducted home by them the day before his death; which appears rather to have been hastened by the fears and jealousy of the senate, than by the revenge of the opposition, none of whom at that time could have had access to him, his house being filled and surrounded by their enemies. The senate had reasons for suspicion of Scipio. They dreaded the dictatorial power which was about to be conferred on him, in order that he might settle the commonwealth: they were dissatisfied at the doubts he entertained of any guilt in Gracchus, of whom he declared his opinion that he was justly slain if he had attempted to possess the supreme power: which expression proves that he doubted, or rather that he disbelieved it, and is equivalent to the declaration that he did not deserve death for any other of his actions or intentions. They also

clearly saw that a man of his equity and firmness would not leave unpunished those who had instigated Popilius Lænas, Opimius, and Metellus to their cruelties against the partisans of Gracchus. Opimius alone had put to death by a *judicial process* no fewer than three thousand Roman citizens, whose only crime was that of demanding what had been left them by Attalus, and promised them by the legitimate rulers of the state.

Since the composition of my Dialogue, I have read the newly found treatise of Cicero, *De Re Publicâ*. It induces me to alter nothing of what I had written, but on the contrary, supplies me with a few more sentences of illustration from him, and subjects of remark. It is amusing to see with what eagerness a sentence that leans towards kingship is seized by the editor. He exclaims, *Notabile Ciceronis dictum de* monarchiæ præstantiâ! *quam in sententiam plerique seu* veteres *seu recentiores politici pedibus eunt*. The sentence is, Nam ipsum regale genus civitatis non modo non est reprehendendum, sed haud scio an reliquis *simplicibus* longe anteponendum, si ullum probarem simplex reipublicæ genus: sed ita quoad statum suum retinet; is est autem status, ut unius perpetuâ potestate et justitiâ, omnique sapientiâ, regatur salus et æquabilitas et otium civium. Certainly, if a king were perfectly just and perfectly wise, his government would be preferable to any other; but it is childish to speculate on any such occurrence, with the experience of ages before us, leading us to so different a conclusion. Scipio speaks of a republic with a king presiding over it; the editor talks of *monarchy*, as we understand the word. Scipio adds, Desunt omnino ei populo multa qui sub rege est, in primis libertas, *quæ non in eo est ut justo utamur domino, sed ut nullo.* Can any thing be more temperate and rational than these expressions? the first of which designate only the utility of the *form*, and that conditionally, and the last give an excellent reason why even the form itself should not be admitted, proving the utility of the form to be incomparably less than what must be given up for it. In going on, he praises L. Brutus, vir

ingenio et virtute præstans, &c. primusque in hac civitate docuit in conservandâ civium libertate esse privatum neminem. This the editor calls *immanem injustamque sententiam!* Yet Cicero in his own person uses nearly the same words in an epistle of the younger Brutus. (Epist. x. ad Familiares.) Nullo publico consilio rempublicam liberâsti, quo etiam est illa res major et clarior. The same opinion is also given by him in the Tusculan Questions. Nunquam privatum esse sapientem, &c. (iv.) Scipio, in commending the advantages that, under conditions quite problematical, may attend the government of one chief magistrate, adds, *Sed tamen inclinatum et quasi pronum ad* perniciosissimum *statum:* and afterwards, Quis enim hunc hominem rite dixerit, qui sibi cum suis civibus, qui denique cum omni hominum genere nullam juris communionem, nullam humanitatis societatem velit?

The education of kings leaves few either wise or honest. The better citizens receive the better education: they are mutual checks one upon another, while kings are mutual guards and fosterers of each other's tyranny. That in fact, whatever it be, is the best form of government, which the most effectually excludes the wicked and unwise, and the most readily admits the wise and virtuous: the two worst are ochlocracy and despotism, both for the same reason: in both there is *vis consilî expers*. Ochlocracy is the more tolerable as being the more transient; one always passes into the other, as its first step. Scipio argues weakly, and Cicero perhaps intends that he should do so, in saying, Illud tamen non adsentior tibi, præstare regi optimates: *si enim* sapientia est quæ gubernat rem publicam, quid tandem interest hæc in uno-ne sit an in pluribus? Here is a *petitio principii* which on no account can be granted. It is surely more probable that wisdom should reside among many, and those the best educated and of mature age, than with one only, and him the worst educated, often of age not mature, and more often bearing thick upon him throughout life the vices of youth and the inconsiderateness of childhood. If Cicero spoke sincerely, he was both foolish and flagitious in

praising those who slew Cesar; for never was there a man so capable of governing alone and well. I will not believe that he was led astray by Plato, who asserts in his fourth book that it is of little consequence whether a state be governed by many or one, if that one is obedient to the laws. Surely a king can more easily find those who will assist him in subverting them than simple citizens can, and is usually more inclined to do it, and is more easily persuaded that it is his interest. Aristoteles, as usual, speaks less idly: what is remarkable is, that his opinion squares perfectly with the Epicurean doctrine. Τέλος μὲν οὖν πόλεως τὸ εὖ ζῆν· τοῦτο δ' ἔστι τὸ ζῆν εὐδαιμόνως καὶ καλῶς. Now this is impossible under men worse and less wise (as hath been the case nine hundred and thirty years in the thousand) than those who occupy the middle ranks in life, to say nothing of those who are uncontaminated by their example and undebased by their tyranny; such men as would exist if *they* did not. Governments, after all, must be constituted according to the habits and propensities of the governed, in which the moral springs from the physical. The Arab must always be free, the Frenchman never: in the Spaniard there still exists what might be expected from the union of Saracen and Goth; in the Englishman, from that of Norman and Saxon. The Greek retains, and displays magnificently, his ancient character: combinations of various kinds militate against the Roman. All traces of ancient institutions have been effaced for ages, excepting in religion. The Roman people was merely the people of one city; its physical peculiarities could not extend themselves, and were entirely lost in a succession of conquerors. But the voice of History refutes the conclusion which certain writers would draw from the celebrated treatise of Cicero, and teaches us that the republican form of government was best adapted to the nation, and that under it the Romans were virtuous and powerful, to a degree which they never attained under kings and emperors. Augustus lost his army in Germany, and commemorated by a trophy the capture of a few castles on the Alps: so greatly and so suddenly had fallen the glory of

Rome, although ruled by a sagacious prince, when the discretion of one was substituted for the counsels and interests and energies of many.

It has been the fashion, and not only of late years, but for ages, to represent the Roman form of government as aristocratical: this is erroneous: Cicero himself says, nihil sacrosanctum esse potest, nisi quod plebs populusve *jusserit*. The people chose all the great functionaries, excepting the interrex: he appointed the dictator, who is falsely thought to have possessed absolute power, even during the short period for which he was created. When Fabius Maximus would have punished Minutius, the tribunes interposed their authority. The senatorial formula, *Videant Consules ne quid detrimenti capiat Res Publica*, has misled many, and indeed misled even Cicero himself, who offended against the forms of law when he saved the commonwealth from Catilina. The supreme power was never legally in the consuls, but constantly in the tribunes of the people; so that Sigonius is wrong in his assertion, *Consules ab omnibus magistratibus concionem avocare potuisse, ab iis neminem.* Nothing is more common than the interference of the tribunes against the consuls. T. Livius (l. xliv.) relates that the effects of Tiberius Gracchus the elder, who had been consul and censor, were *consecrated* (which in arbitrary governments is called *confiscated)* because he had disobeyed an order of the tribune L. Flavius; a tribune committed to prison the consul Metellus; the censor Appius was punished in the same manner by the same tribunitian authority. Carbo, who had been thrice consul, was condemned to death by Pompey from the tribunitian chair. Drusus, as tribune, sent the consul Philippus to prison with a halter round his neck, *obtritâ gulâ* (Florus, clv.). One Vectius was slain for not rising up before the tribune.

With all these facts (I must believe it) in his memory, Cicero still would consider the legitimate government of Rome as an aristocracy; for otherwise how could he himself be aristocratical, which he avows he was? He wrote his treatise *De Republicâ* ten years before his death, when the greater

and more costly part of his experience was wanting. In the dialogue he is represented as on the verge of a political world, of which he had been the mover and protector, while the elements of it announce to him that it is bursting under his feet.

He is hardly to be called inconsistent, who, guided by the experience of recent facts, turns at last to wiser sentiments, opposite as they may be to those he entertained the greater part of his life. If any one shall assert that I attribute to Cicero an inconsistency unwarranted by his writings, my answer is, that there is manifestly a much greater between the facts he states in these quotations, and the conclusions he appears by his line of policy to have drawn from them; and that, taking his own statement, I do no injustice to his discernment and ratiocination, in bringing home to him a new inference. Whatever be the defects and weaknesses of this memorable and truly glorious man, I disclose them with feelings far different from exultation: I mention them hesitatingly, reluctantly, and with awe; for in comparison with the meanest, the most negligent of his productions, how inelegant, rude, and barbarous is the most elaborate composition, the most applauded eloquence of our times!

I have occasionally, but rarely, scattered a few verses amongst the Dialogues. The following, connected in subject with much, and in spirit with all that has gone before, may stand here as a voluntary to close the work.

WE are what suns and winds and waters make us;
The mountains are our sponsors, and the rills
Fashion and win their nursling with their smiles.
But where the land is dim from tyranny,
There tiny pleasures occupy the place
Of glories and of duties; as the feet
Of fabled faeries when the sun goes down
Trip o'er the grass where wrestlers strove by day.
Then Justice, called the eternal one above,
Is more inconstant than the buoyant form
That bursts into existence from the froth
Of ever-varying ocean: what is best
Then becomes worst; what loveliest, most deformed.
The heart is hardest in the softest climes,
The passions flourish, the affections die.
O thou vast tablet of these awful truths,

That fillest all the space between the seas,
Spreading from Venice's deserted courts
To the Tarentine and Hydruntine mole,
What lifts thee up? what shakes thee? tis the
breath
Of God! awake, ye nations! spring to life!
Let the last work of his righthand appear
Fresh with his image... Man.

Thou recreant slave
That sittest afar off and helpest not,
O thou degenerate Albion! with what shame
Do I survey thee, pushing forth the spunge
At thy spear's length, in mockery at the thirst
Of holy Freedom in his agony,
And prompt and keen to pierce the wounded side!

Must Italy then wholly rot away
Amidst her slime, before she germinate
Into fresh vigour, into form again?
What thunder bursts upon mine ear! some isle
Hath surely risen from the gulphs profound,
Eager to suck the sunshine from the breast
Of beauteous Nature, and to catch the gale
From golden Hermus and Melæna's brow.
A greater thing than isle, than continent,
Than earth itself, than ocean circling earth,
Hath risen there; regenerate Man hath risen.

Generous old bard of Chios! not that Jove
Deprived thee in thy latter days of sight
Would I complain, but that no higher theme
Than a disdainful youth, a lawless King,
A pestilence, a pyre, awoke thy song,
When on the Chian coast, one javelin's throw
From where thy tombstone, where thy cradle stood,
Twice twenty self-devoted Greeks assailed
The naval host of Asia, at one blow
Scattered it into air...and Greece was free...
And ere these glories beamed, thy day had closed.

Let all that Elis ever saw give way,
All that Olympian Jove e'er smiled upon.
The Marathonian columns never told
A tale more glorious, never Salamis,
Nor, faithful in the centre of the false,
Platæa, nor Anthela, from whose mount
Benignant Ceres wards the blessed Laws,
And sees the Amphictyon dip his weary foot
In the warm streamlet of the strait below*.

Goddess! although thy brow was never reared
Among the Powers, that guarded or assailed
Perfidious Ilion, parricidal Thebes,
Or other walls whose war-belt e'er inclosed

* The Amphictyons met annually in the temple of Ceres near Anthela.

Man's congregated crimes and vengeful Pain,
Yet hast thou touched the extremes of grief and
joy...
Grief upon Enna's mead and Hell's ascent,
A solitary mother...joy beyond,
Far beyond, that thy woe, in this thy fane:
The tears were human, but the bliss divine.

I, in the land of strangers, and deprest
With sad and certain presage for my own,
Exult at hope's fresh dayspring, though afar,
There where my youth was not unexercised
By chiefs in willing war and faithful song:
Shades as they were, they were not empty shades,
Whose bodies haunt our world and blear our sun...
Obstruction worse than swamp and shapeless sands.
Peace, praise, eternal gladness, to the souls
That, rising from the seas into the heavens,
Have ransomed first their country with their blood!

O thou immortal Spartan! at whose name
The marble table sounds beneath my palms,
Leonidas! even thou wilt not disdain
To mingle names august as these with thine;
Nor thou, twin star of glory, thou whose rays
Streamed over Corinth on the double sea,
Achaian and Saronic; whom the sons
Of Syracuse, when Death removed thy light,

Wept more than slavery ever made them weep,
But shed (if gratitude is sweet) sweet tears...
For the hand that then poured ashes o'er their
heads
Was loosened from its desperate chain by thee.

What now can press mankind into one mass,
For Tyranny to tread the more secure?
From gold alone is drawn the guilty wire
That Adulation trills: she mocks the tone
Of Duty, Courage, Virtue, Piety,
And under her sits Hope! O how unlike
That graceful form in azure vest arrayed,
With brow serene, and eyes on heaven alone
In patience fixt, in fondness unobscured!
What monsters coil beneath the spreading tree
Of Despotism! what wastes extend around!
What poison floats upon the distant breeze!
But who are those that cull and deal its fruit?
Creatures that shun the light and fear the shade,
Bloated and fierce, Sleep's mien and Famine's
cry...
Rise up again, rise in thy dignity,
Dejected Man, and scare this brood away.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

